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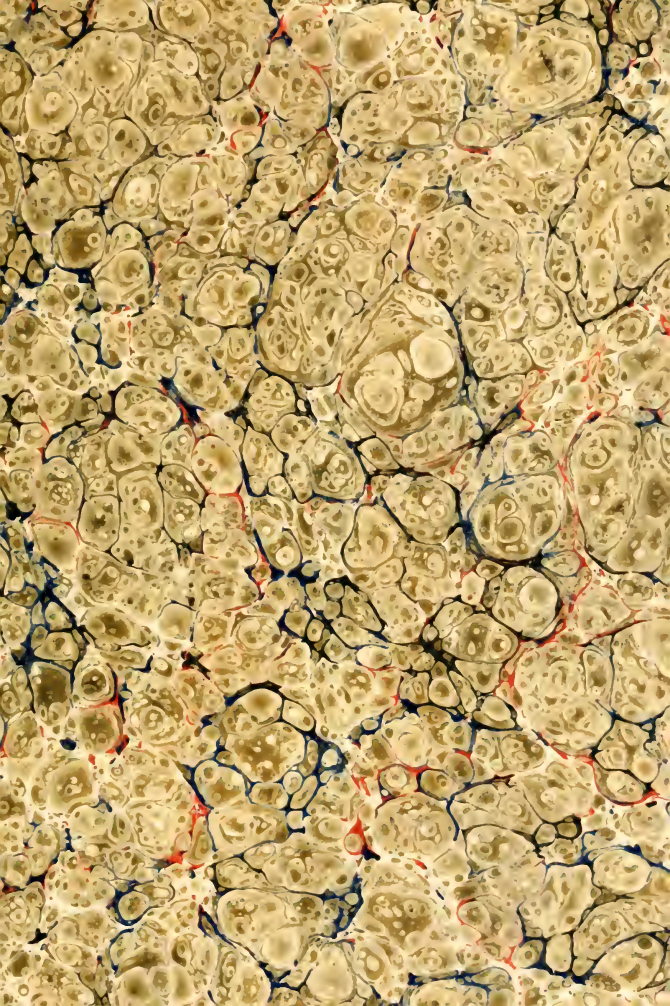

Wm. M. Darlington

2542 - F

Lady Hamilton.

Engraved by Henry Meyer from a Painting by Romney.

Published April 1st 1815 by Henry Colburn, Conduit Street

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MEMOIRS

OF

LADY HAMILTON;

WITH

Illustrative Anecdotes

OF

MANY OF HER MOST PARTICULAR FRIENDS

AND

DISTINGUISHED CONTEMPORARIES.

Embellished with a fine Portrait, after Romney.

The spring time of our years
Is soon dishonour'd and defil'd; in most
By budding ills, that ask a prudent hand
To check them.

COWPER.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR HENRY COLBURN,

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B. Clarke, Printer, Well-street, London.

Preface.

Though the introductory chapter contains an explicit statement of the views of the writer, and an ample apology for a biographical memoir of this description, it may be necessary to apprize the reader that the facts here related are brought forward merely as illustrative of character, and not to indulge a splenetic disposition, or to gratify an idle curiosity.

It is possible, however, that some persons will be offended with what is here narrated, and the reflections to which the incidents have given rise;

while others, perhaps, may feel resentment at the disclosure of circumstances that have a tendency to weaken their admiration of men of eminence: but, in justification of the Author, let it be considered that morality is of greater value than genius, and that the precepts and institutions of religion are of infinitely more consequence than temporal glory.

When, therefore, any of those, who have risen above their contemporaries by their performances, are found remarkably deficient in those duties which constitute the only points of efficient example, the causes of their errors and the consequences of their follies ought to be plainly related, that historic truth may not be injured by partial representa-

tions, nor the power of virtue weakened by the influence of splendid names.

But if, after all, any reasonable objection shall be made to what is detailed in these sheets, or the slightest wound be inflicted thereby on the feelings of those who have a claim to respect, for their connexions and their virtues, the Author will be the first to condemn the offensive page, and to remove, by retraction, the impression which it may have made; being herein animated by the sentiment of the greatest of poets,

——————Επος δ' ειπεϱ τι βεβακται
Δεινον, αφαϱ το φεϱοιεν αναϱπαξασαι ανελλαι.

If any words offend the candid mind,
Far, far away those words, ye whirlwinds, bear,
And scatter them, ye storms, in empty air.

HOMER.

Any corrections, or additional information, that may be forwarded to the care of the Publisher, shall be duly acknowledged in another impression of these Memoirs.

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MEMOIRS

OF

LADY HAMILTON.

CHAP. I.

Nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE maxim, that "nothing should be said of the dead, but what is good," though it has become proverbial by the frequency of repetition, and the benevolence which it seems to inculcate, is too often made an excuse for error, and an apology for depravity. But whatever may be the

nature or the extent of the rule, it never could have been intended to operate as an act of indemnity, to cover in oblivion the deeds of those who have endeavoured to loosen the foundations of morality by their principles, or to render vice attractive by their example. The precept of the ancients must be regarded as equivalent to the universal duty of doing strict justice to all concerning whom we may be called to give the testimony of our knowledge, and of adhering rigidly to truth, without any mixture of prejudice, in what we relate of the conduct of others, whether they are in the capacity of speaking for themselves, or are placed beyond the possibility of being affected by our praise or our censure. Were the doctrine otherwise, and did it lay survivors at all times, and in every circumstance, under the immutable obligation of concealing the obliquities of those who have been removed from this busy stage, where every action of the humblest individual has

some connexion with his contemporaries, and effect on posterity, history would be no better than romance, by depriving mankind of the lessons for the regulation of life, which are afforded by the contemplation of human infirmity. Coloured by the partiality of friendship, and shaded by an excess of liberality, the examples, even of the most upright men, would lose much of their efficacy for the want of being rendered familiar by those peculiar touches of character, which can alone enable the mind to form a correct estimate of those qualities which are the object of admiration. Active virtue is most brilliant in the resistance of temptations, and in that conflict which brings the passions under the dominion of reason. The nature of this trial, and the value of the conquest, cannot be duly appreciated, without closely inspecting human nature in the varieties of public and private life. In this study, the whole of man must be investigated, if any im-

provement is expected from the enquiry ; but that will be looked for in vain, unless the ruling principle of the mind is distinctly marked, the favourite pursuits are clearly exhibited, and all the circumstances related to them are faithfully detailed, and minutely observed. No judgment is to be formed of men from particular occurrences; and it would be as useless to think of obtaining a correct knowledge of their real character in the bustle of the world, as it would be idle to leave the completion of our own to the meditations of a cloister. Virtue and vice are often so confounded in this world, through the ignorance and weakness of mankind, that to be guarded against the frequent artifices which are used to pass off the one for the other, it is necessary that both should be examined as they appear recorded in the lives of those who have distinguished themselves by their merit, or who have become notorious by their crimes. There is, besides, such a mix-

ture of different qualities in every person, that no exact idea of any one can be obtained from a representation, in which only the general outline of character is given, without a discrimination of excellences and defects. Where these are not stated with fidelity, and balanced with judgment, the reader is misled, and the interests of truth are violated.

A writer of no ordinary powers, has said of history, that it is philosophy teaching by example; and this definition is particularly just, when applied to that department which is devoted exclusively to the memoirs of persons who have been conspicuous in their day, either by their own immediate actions, or by the influence which they possessed over those of others. The efficiency of every such narrative for a moral purpose, consists in the truth with which it is told, and the lesson which it is intended to impart. Hence it is obvious, that the historian must relate facts as they happened, with

their causes, and trace actions to their motives and consequences. This cannot be done without delineating the primary movers and agents of the transactions recorded exactly as they were known to the most intimate of their associates. Any other mode of depicting human life, as it may have been remarkable in the conduct of those who now cease to affect the world, except as warnings or examples, would have the effect of producing false ideas of the faculties of man, and the most pernicious notions of his duties. Of those persons who have raised themselves above their contemporaries by splendid talents and extraordinary services, we should be able to form no other conception than what is excited by the report of wonders, which are magnified and distorted beyond their proportions, by not being distinctly beheld. The mistake of describing the fair side of human nature only, has a direct tendency to contract the mind within a sphere wherein

little exertion will seem requisite to become eminent either in knowledge or virtue. The voyage of life abounds with difficulties and dangers, which, to be overcome and avoided, must be encountered with that resolution which is the effect of diligence, and the confidence that results from caution.

Such is the wise order of Providence, that the very errors and crimes of men are oftentimes made subservient to the general good, by being rendered beacons and landmarks to warn other passengers, in this probationary course, against falling by those delusions which have proved fatal to so many of the most favoured of the human race. Thus it is, that the oldest and best of all books exhibits numerous instances of the lapse of men, who, on other accounts, are set forth as bright examples of fortitude and self-denial. In the volume of immortality, where piety is exemplified in all the relations which man can be supposed to fill, we are taught

how to imitate the virtues we admire; and to practise the duties enjoined, by the minute and faithful relation of the evils attending an occasional departure from the path of rectitude. It would seem, then, as if no apology or sanction could be at all necessary for the practice of describing men as they truly were, when they lived among us, and of reporting their actions with impartiality; since, in this, we do no more than what is recommended by the highest of all authority. For the purposes of moral edification, this particular delineation of the human character is essentially necessary; and, with a view to the formation of an exact judgment of mankind, it is absolutely indispensible. Memoirs that are written with a studied attention to render the subject pleasing, are like pictures, in which likeness is neglected for the sake of beauty.

If any excuse should be deemed requisite for the introduction of remarks,

the justice of which must be self-evident, even to those who feel more delight in the elegance of diction than the simplicity of truth, that excuse will be found in the uncertainty which is spread over the real characters of distinguished persons, by the design or carelessness of their biographers.

An evil practice has of late years prevailed, of eulogizing persons of note, instead of giving a detailed account of their pursuits and sentiments, the habits which they acquired, and the errors into which they occasionally fell. This method of substituting panegyric for history has indeed become so general, that it would not be surprising to see a justificatory memoir of GUY FAWKES, or an apology for the conduct of NELL GWYN.

To such a height of paradoxical extravagance has this spirit been carried among us, that men of genius have laboured with uncommon diligence in searching for imaginary causes, or in devising so-

phistical arguments, to defend the criminal conduct of those who never were able to vindicate themselves. The bloodiest regicides of ancient and modern times have been canonized as patriots; men who trampled upon every principle of humanity, and women who cast aside all the traces of modesty, have had their respective advocates; even the lustful prophet of Mecca has had more than one apologist; and some of the most furious persecutors, who armed themselves with the Bible in one hand and the sword in the other, have found, in our day, writers of grave characters and respectable talents, to maintain their principles, and to justify their actions.

But in nothing has this shameful violation of literary justice been more notorious, than in the ordinary practice of sacrificing historical verity at the shrine of public opinion, or to gratify the feelings of private friendship.

We have seen men of great name and of

brilliant talents, celebrated, not merely on account of their transcendent powers, but considered as objects deserving of esteem and imitation by their virtues; though, at the same time, the encomiasts, who have so inconsiderately ventured beyond the legitimate boundaries of praise, were driven to the pitiful necessity of suppressing facts, for fear of exposing themselves, and of injuring the reputation of those whom they had so extravagantly commended. On one occasion, we have seen female libertinism justified as the assertion of freedom; and an author of another character has deliberately ascribed the cruel abandonment of a wife and infant family to an excessive sensibility, and the ambition of professional excellence.

Thus it is, that a description of writing, which, of all others, perhaps is the most impressively adapted for moral purposes, instead of being rendered, as it ought to be, one of the noblest instruments of virtue, becomes a vehicle for palliating vice.

They who so grossly impose on the curiosity of the public, by perverting that to flattery, which should be solely devoted to the interests of truth, are always ready to avail themselves of the language of the plaintive poet, in drawing a veil over the actions of the dead:

> No farther seek his merits to disclose,
> Or draw his frailties from their dread abode.

But however just this monition may be in private life, where the disclosure of infirmities would only serve to sharpen malice, and to inflame the passions, without answering any instructive end, it cannot be admitted as of any authority in the exercise of that judgment which we have a right to form and express concerning the character of those persons who have borne a leading part in the theatre of the world. There, surely, if the memoirs of men are to be noticed at all, they must be related with a scrupulous regard to facts; though, by so doing,

the fame of the dead should be materially affected, or the feelings of the survivors be hurt by the exposure.

The condition of those persons whose conduct is of a nature to require detail and investigation, cannot suffer by the fullness and simplicity of truth; but the living may be considerably injured by the folly of misrepresentation, and the indiscretion of friendship.

Some have supposed that no good can result to society from the publication of human imperfections, and that the moral interest of the age is little concerned in the private pursuits of men in high stations. This wretched conclusion is refuted by the consideration that many of the most important events of history have originated in circumstances, the particulars and effects of which could not be properly known or justly estimated, without an exact acquaintance with the ruling dispositions, and favourite connexions, of the primary agents. Great revolutions

may sometimes be traced to occurrences of trivial moment; it is, therefore, necessary that these should be carefully examined, and faithfully stated, to prevent the establishment of false principles, or the application of unjust censure. Nations are taught wisdom as much by errors and misfortunes, as by splendid achievements; for though the latter may prove powerful incentives to great exertions, they are often instrumental in fostering ambition, and generating prodigality. But neither, on the one hand, would splendid actions operate effectually as objects of imitation, nor could failings be rendered beneficial as warnings, if the private history of the parties immediately interested in them were totally disregarded.

If these observations are at all just, and they have for their support not only the sanction of the best writers of antiquity, but the manifest advantage of checking the progress of fiction, an ample

justification will be found in them for the publication of a memoir, the subject of which will perhaps be deemed by many too insignificant for such a distinction, and of too light a cast to be made subservient to any practical purposes of moral improvement.

To the fastidious critic, no reasons assigned for the undertaking will prove convincing; and to the prejudiced reader, no apology for the freedom of discussion, or the minuteness of detail, will be satisfactory. But while the author utterly disclaims the malignant intention of dragging failings to the light, the existence of which is to be lamented, he wishes it to be seriously considered, that those very failings have been attended with awful consequences, and some too that have deeply affected the honour of the country.

Though hardly any thing can be more odious than the depraved appetite, which, delighting chiefly in secret history, makes

no scruple of rending off the cerements of the dead, to the annoyance of the living; still there are some painful occasions, when the paramount interests of mankind demand the detection of hypocrisy, and the exposure of folly, that the young and inexperienced may be guarded against the error of substituting accomplishments for duties, or of supposing that the admiration of virtue is equivalent to the discharge of its obligations.

Passion and prejudice have too long prevailed over the public mind with respect to circumstances, concerning which posterity will demand a honest report. It is, therefore, now time for the voice of justice and humanity to be calmly heard, and that Reason should take her seat, to record facts, before they shall have faded from the memory, and before the tongue shall be sealed up in silence, or the hand be mouldered into dust, that may have the power of communicating them to the world.

CHAP. II.

Honour and shame from no condition rise:
Act well your part; there all the honour lies.
POPE.

It certainly would be a very unjust and dangerous attempt, to make the character and genius of men dependent on their origin and rank in society. By assuming it as a general principle, that pedigree has an effect on the mind and the morals, we should run the risk of introducing a distinction of casts among the members of the same community, not merely similar, but even more degrading if possible than that which prevails in the east. Still it can hardly be denied that there is such a disposition to imitation, and propensity to early habits,

as must contribute very powerfully to tinge the principles and manners of those, who, in their youthful days, have been compelled to hear vulgar language, to be engaged in mean occupations, and to associate with rude and ignorant companions.

One of our greatest moralists, who owed more to himself than to his relations, has said, in his strong manner, that there is a "scoundrelism about persons of low birth." No man knew better than he did how to appreciate worth in all stations, and no man ever acted with less servility to the great, or with more urbanity to the poor. His observation, therefore, must be taken in a qualified sense, as expressing only what he had commonly met with, and proving that the influence of pristine meanness will, more or less, continue through life. Of the truth of this remark, we shall meet with some striking proofs in the following memoirs, throughout the whole of which, the want

of early instruction and example will be seen, and the force of low habits and improper connexions will be completely understood.

The person whose adventures we are now to report, as far as they can be traced, and with every allowance for the uncertainty in which the early history of such characters is always involved, owed her origin to a couple that lived together in a menial capacity, in the county Palatine of Chester. The man, whose name was LYON, survived this marriage only a short time, leaving, in 1761, a young widow, and an infant daughter, named EMMA, wholly without support. In consequence of this melancholy change in her circumstances, the poor woman retired to Hawarden, in Flintshire, which was her native place, and where she was now enabled by her industry, and the kindness of friends, to maintain herself and this child, whose education was such

as might be expected from the poverty of her mother's circumstances, and the little time that could be allowed from domestic occupations. In an account of herself, however, which the subject of this narrative thought proper to dictate at the request of an enterprising bookseller, for a collection of what he called "Public Characters," it is stated that she received an education superior to damsels of her condition, at the expense of the late Earl of Halifax. This was one of those instances of deception in which she was too apt to indulge, and by which she foolishly hoped to impose upon the credulity of mankind. The truth is, that all the instruction which she ever obtained in childhood, consisted in the simple article of reading, and that so very imperfectly, as to be unaccompanied by correctness in spelling, a qualification, in fact, which she never properly acquired to the end of her days, though she mixed so much with polished society,

and even had an extensive correspondence.

Yet, in justice to the energies of her mind, it should be observed in this place, that she supplied the defects of her original condition by voluntary application and uncommon diligence, at that period when gaiety and business may be supposed to furnish plausible excuses for neglecting the labour of intellectual improvement.

At the age of twelve or thirteen she was received into the family of Mr. Thomas Hawarden, brother-in-law of the late Alderman Boydell, and father of the eminent surgeon in Leicester Square. Her situation in this place was that of a nursery-maid; and it is worthy of remark, that in her subsequent changes, she ever preserved a grateful sense of the kindness which she had experienced from the friends of her youth, who were well disposed to give her all the instruction that was suited to her condition in life.

One of the ordinary topics of complaint in most circles, is that of the folly or ingratitude of servants; and we may often hear persons of good sense and liberality feelingly lamenting the sudden change which takes place in those domestics who have been taken from small families, and even from distant cottages, with the most laudable views and benevolent purposes.

But were the entire circumstances properly considered, and thoroughly investigated, it would in all likelihood appear that the objects so strongly stigmatized, as inconsiderate and extravagant, capricious and insolent, are in reality the parties most injured. Without justifying the weakness, or palliating the conduct of servants, we may, however, safely advance thus much in their favour, that they are for the most part unprepared by monition and practice for the line of life in which it is their chance to be placed. The manners of the country are

so different from those of the capital, and the restraint necessarily produced there by observation has such a constant effect on the mind, as frequently to preserve even the volatile within the bounds of decorum. It is not at all to be wondered, therefore, that when the pleasures and freedom of London chance to be mentioned, uneasiness should be produced, and desire created to exchange a life of obscurity and fatigue for one of comparative ease and splendour. The disappointment which such persons naturally experience, is to be attributed to their erroneous impressions, and to the facilities that have been held out to draw them from that humble privacy in which they were born, and where they might have enjoyed calm and virtuous content, if the delusion of seeing the world had not been thrown in their way.

Happy certainly would it have been for Emma, had she been suffered to remain in her original state of obscurity

and servitude, but still more so if she had never been transplanted from her native mountains, to breathe the contaminating air, and to witness the licentious manners of an overgrown and luxurious city.

At sixteen she visited London, where she obtained a place with a tradesman in St. James's Market; and it is said, that when some years afterwards she moved in a sphere of splendour, she called in her carriage at this shop, and expressed a strong sense of gratitude to her old master and mistress.

In her next situation, which was with a lady of fortune, she had ample opportunities of gratifying her love of reading, by the books obtained from the circulating library for the amusement of her mistress: but the information derived from these volumes was ill adapted to moderate the ebullitions of vanity, to mortify the impetuosity of passion, to chasten the mind, by a consideration of the duties of

life, or to point out the dangerous rocks and hidden shoals, which are certain of proving destructive to those who are impelled by emotions, instead of being directed by the sense of religion.

Novels and romances, in rapid succession, without reflection or discrimination, constituted the chief delight of this young person, who had been sent out into the world unarmed, either by prudent counsel or parental example. Here it would be wrong to omit the very remarkable and feeling censure which was passed on this pernicious waste of time, by the very person of whom we are speaking, and who, as we shall find, suffered so much from the evil. Adverting to what had been her own practice in early life, she used to condemn very pointedly those who, from design or carelessness, threw such allurements in the way of their domestics. So strong, indeed, was her sense of the mischievous tendency of those productions on the minds of the

giddy and uninformed, as to declare that if she had the choice, her preference would be given to a servant that could not read at all, to one that was so qualified. This, to be sure, was carrying matters to the utmost extremity; and the reason she was pleased to assign for her opinion, though curious and ingenious enough, cannot by any means be admitted as a sufficient justification of the decision founded upon it. "Wherever," she would observe, "a female servant, especially if she is young, and has a turn for reading, can indulge her inclination by the books which lie in the apartments of her mistress, the business in which she should be employed will surely be neglected, and her mind be raised, by the perusal, above the sphere in which it is her province to move."

The truth of this remark, in all its extent, can hardly be denied, and yet the purpose to which it was applied must be condemned, as a pitiful endeavour to

license that folly in superiors, from which their dependents should be debarred by ignorance. The proper refutation of such sophistry, when offered as an apology for an arbitrary distinction, is that which transfers the culpability from the servants to their employers; since, if the last were properly mindful of their duty, and took care not to place such allurements in the way of their domestics, these last would neither idle away the time, which should be better employed, nor poison their minds, which ought to be otherwise exercised.

Novels and the theatre have, perhaps, ruined more than ever they instructed; yet it would be an act of vandalism to consign all works of fiction to the flames, or to pronounce an absolute decree of proscription against all dramatic representation, instead of regulating both by the laws of morality, and teaching the use to which alone they ought to be applied.

An inordinate attachment to books, exhibiting the falsest pictures of human nature, and to the play-house, where the passions are inflamed rather than corrected, had the most baneful influence on the mind of this giddy adventurer on the perilous ocean of life. That which commenced at the outset in the laxity of discipline, became habitual by the want of monition in the progress; and this being confirmed by the total absence of example in the heads of the household, had the effect of lessening that delicacy of sentiment, and dread of shame, which will ever prove an adamantine shield to the female heart, and the most powerful guard of its honour.

The next place to which she removed, was one that flattered her vanity, and gave a latitude to her inclinations. Her appearance became almost as powerful a recommendation as her character, to a lady who figured greatly in the fashionable world, and whose house was

the continual resort of gay persons, among whom were some distinguished writers for the stage, and others, who stood high in the public esteem, as singers and performers. This, it may naturally be supposed, was exactly the place that best suited the peculiar inclination of the lively Emma, whose heart was but too susceptible of the allurements which were now most amply spread before her by the folly of the vain, and the designs of the vicious.

The family, into which she thought herself perfectly happy in being admitted as housemaid, presented to her view a perpetual round of bustling activity, which had no other object than to provide luxury for those who thought only of indulging their love of pleasure, by pampering the senses with new sources of extravagance. The day was occupied in preparations for the festivities of the evening; and those hours which should have been devoted to rest and reflection,

were sacrificed to scenes of dissipation. One part of the week was nearly the same as the other; and there was hardly any thing to mark the return of that day which human and divine authority have combined to render sacred, except in the selection of company and the change of amusements. The servants were under the necessity of pursuing their ordinary avocations, instead of enjoying that rest which the law enjoined, and their improvement required. In this whirlpool of hurry and pleasure, the domestics had neither time for serious meditation, nor opportunities allowed them to learn their duty. From those who should have established order by their authority, and recommended temperance by their example, no rules of sobriety were received, nor any useful knowledge gained for the regulation of the conduct, and the improvement of the mind. So long as the respective business of each servant was discharged, entire satisfaction was given,

and no attention was paid to the manner in which the residue of time was employed, or to the company that they kept.

In such a place, the dangers attending youth and beauty were multiplied by the facilities now offered of indulging that love of theatrical amusement which had already been too strongly excited; by the incessant flatteries which were addressed to a credulous ear, and the various arts that were continually adopted to charm away all apprehension of future misery, in the desire of present gratification. It was impossible that in a house like this, the charms of Emma should pass unobserved by the numerous visitors who were on terms of close intimacy with the family. To a figure of uncommon elegance were added features perfectly regular, with a countenance of such indescribable sweetness of expression, as fixed the beholder in admiration. The airiness of her form gave a peculiar grace to her movements, and such was the

flexibility of her limbs, that she might have been considered as a mountain nymph. Her agility, however, though light and sportive, had nothing in it of boisterous activity; nor in the gaiety which she supported, did there appear any of that levity which seems to court instead of repelling temptation. Among the many attractions which at this period distinguished the female of whom we are speaking, that of a very musical voice was one that could hardly fail in the situation where she was placed to excite attention and inflame vanity. Having the advantage of a good ear, aided also by a retentive memory, she was enabled to sing popular airs with considerable effect; and the opportunities which she enjoyed of frequenting places of public amusement, served to increase the passion for dramatic entertainments. The effect produced by these exhibitions, was that of adding to her love of singing a strong turn for mimicry, which was

encouraged by her companions to such a degree, as to become the subject of very general conversation.

By the folly of those who should have checked this propensity, instead of giving it any countenance, that which was at first a mere playful act of occasional humour, and perhaps nothing more than a harmless amusement, settled into a habit, and drew off the mind from its proper pursuits, and those occupations, which, diligently attended to, and regularly followed, might have rendered this young person a much more useful though a less brilliant member of society. Hereby she acquired a boldness which proved the leading feature of her character through life, to which her ruin was owing in the first instance, and which confirmed her in the habits of intrigue and extravagance, so completely as to render her equally the deceiver of her own heart, while she was imposing on the credulity of others.

CHAP. III.

Ah, turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless shiv'ring female lies.
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
Has wept at tales of innocence distrest;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn;
Now lost to all, her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the show'r,
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,
When, idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel and robes of country brown.

GOLDSMITH.

THE female who hesitates on the threshold of temptation, by stopping to listen with inquisitive delight to the tale of flattery, is lost. She betrays her virtue, by giving encouragement to the voice of praise, when she should be employed

in examining her conduct, to discover what it is that renders her an object of admiration. Thus it was in the present instance, and more could not well have been expected, considering the circumstances in which this young person was placed, the gifts with which she was furnished, the graces she possessed, and the companions with whom she daily associated. Her first lapse from the path of virtue was occasioned by an act of good nature ; for in the early part of the American war, a friend or relation having been impressed and sent on board the tender off the Tower, she had the courage to wait upon the late Admiral John Payne, then a captain, employed in the regulating service, with a request that he would cause the man to be liberated. That gallant officer was so much struck with the manner of the lovely petitioner, that he granted her prayer, and became a suitor in return. These flattering attentions were far from being unacceptable

to one whose principles were already weakened, and she soon became the avowed mistress of her gallant admirer, who spared no expense in setting off her charms to the best advantage.

But after some time, the late Sir Harry Featherston having declared his passion for Emma in warm terms, her protector very generously consented to yield up the fair one to the opulent baronet, who conducted her to his seat in Sussex. Here for some months she led a life of fictitious grandeur, as the nominal mistress of a noble mansion, though she soon had the mortification of seeing that her real character was known, and despised, even by those who were under the necessity of obeying her commands. The fondness of her protector, the extravagant adulation of his sporting companions, and the continual succession of riotous amusements, could not prevent the intrusion of some bitter recollections; and an inward feeling of resentment at

the occasional marks of contempt which were betrayed by the honest rustics, who were as yet far from exchanging their reverence of the laws and institutions of their ancestors, for the idle sophistry, the frivolous distinctions, and shameful customs, of the fashionable world.

Emma, during her residence at Up Park, displayed her agility and ingenuity in various festive scenes, and she particularly obtained great applause on account of her equestrian powers, sitting on her horse with uncommon elegance, and rivalling in speed the boldest of her acquaintance. But this course of dissipation was of short continuance; and though roses appeared scattered in every path, the pleasure which they yielded faded quickly away, leaving nothing but thorns behind.

After spending the summer and part of the autumn in the country, the baronet removed with his prize to London, where, for many reasons, he avoided exhibiting her in a public manner, and she was ac-

cordingly placed in private lodgings, without parade or distinction. For some time the condition was easy and agreeable enough to prevent the suspicion of its having any insidious object; but when neglect and indifference became too apparent to escape observation, the keen sense of wrong produced remonstrances, which were received with a coolness that only served to aggravate the resentment, and to hasten a separation.

Thus abandoned in her utmost need, without either friend, property, or character, this hapless victim of vanity and deceit was driven to encounter the ruthless storm, dependent upon charms which had already deprived her of peace, and which were now to provide her a guilty support. Of the variety of scenes through which this daughter of vicissitude passed, after experiencing that treachery which most commonly follows the sacrifice of virgin innocence, it is impossible to give an account; and even were the particulars most exactly remembered, or easily col-

lected, still the relation of them could hardly be attended with any better effect than that of ministering to a spirit of idle curiosity, which seeks only for amusement in tales of misfortune, and derives a wretched kind of pleasure from observing the follies of mankind.

The gradations from splendid distinction gained by the loss of virtue, to the extremity of want and misery, were so rapid, that in a few months she was nearly an outcast in the metropolis, when one of those casual occurrences, which sometimes produce a complete turn in human affairs, is said to have again restored her to society.

The encouragement which is afforded in this land of credulity to every species of empiricism, never fails to stimulate the genius of new adventurers, whose claims to public support have the greater chance of being successful, in proportion as they are removed from decency, and at variance with probability. At the

period of which we are speaking, one of those impudent pretenders to superior wisdom, who are continually taking advantage of the national thirst for wonder and novelty, contrived to fill his pockets at the expense of the thoughtless and the ignorant, by an exhibition, which, in any other country than England, would have subjected the inventor to close imprisonment, or perpetual exile. This man, who, in point of education and abilities, ranked above the general description of quacks, affected to explain the inmost secrets of nature, and to unfold all her mysterious operations in the continuance of each species of animal intelligence, while to his hearers he ventured to hold out the infallible charm that was to insure the enjoyment of health, pleasure, and longevity. The lectures of Dr. Graham, however, would hardly have answered his purpose, in a lucrative point of view, if he had not enlivened them by descriptions and illustrations, which served to

excite sensations, and to provoke desires that rather stood in need of a restraint than a stimulant. When the popularity of these licentious discourses began to fail by repetition, the orator had recourse to a bold device, to awaken the public attention, and to draw around his rostrum once more crowded audiences of the weak and the wicked, consisting of those who, from inexperience, could see no deformity in vice, and of habitual debauchees, who had no higher enjoyment. To gratify a most depraved taste, and that from the vilest of all motives, the love of gain, this unprincipled charlatan resolved to introduce a new object of attraction, in the person of some young but unfortunate female, whose figure might render her a perfect model of health and beauty. The difficulty certainly lay in obtaining an object who would submit to be exhibited, in a condition, the very proposal of which could not but make the most wretched of the

sex shudder at the degradation. Yet the lecturer was not mistaken in his opinion of mankind, when he reckoned upon the complete success of his scheme, not only in gaining auditors, but in finding a subject who would consent, for a reward, to stand in all the simplicity of nature, as the representative of the chearful goddess of health and inspiring beauty. The event fully answered his expectations; and thus the unhappy fair one, whose misfortunes were owing in a great measure to her lovely form and mimic powers, now became indebted to the same causes for a deliverance from the lowest state of misery. Disgusting as the consideration of this incident must be to every one who feels the slightest respect for the honour of human nature, and concern for the interests of virtue, both of which were grossly insulted by an exhibition that would have put a heathen to the blush, still our indignation ought to be directed

against the lecturer and his hearers, rather than to the frail object of a licentious curiosity, and the instrument of gross imposture. While the fact of this exhibition itself stands uncontradicted, the friends of the female who figured in it have persevered in denying her connexion with the scene. But their zeal is more gratifying to the feelings, than satisfactory to the judgment. Such a circumstance could not have been related without some foundation, and the writer of this had the whole history from a person of the highest literary character, twenty-four years ago.

Of this strange folly some eminent artists, both painters and sculptors, contrived to profit in their respective lines, by adopting this elegant form as a model. Many exquisite pieces were accordingly painted and chiselled after this most finished production of Nature's workmanship; and the remunerations which she received for these acts of condescension placed her in a situation above want,

Still it is not to be disguised, that the declension from virtue, and the habits which she had acquired, left too strong a tinge to be wholly obliterated even by the blow of adversity, and the change which she had experienced.

Her admirers increased as the representations of her multiplied; and the praises which she continually heard, from those who certainly were the most adequate judges of perfect symmetry and real beauty, tended effectually to wear away the sense of disgrace, and to reconcile the mind to the blandishments of guilt.

Among those who were captivated by the personal graces of the lively and fascinating Emma, and who devoted much professional attention to the delineation of her in various characters, the eccentric ROMNEY was by far the most distinguished in his attachment, and the most favoured by the object of his admiration.

This artist was then at the zenith of his reputation, in Cavendish Square; but his moral character may be correctly esti-

mated from the fact acknowledged, even by his panegyrists, that he had abandoned a virtuous wife and two children, about twenty years before the period at which we are now arrived.

The most particular friend and biographer of the painter, though utterly unable, and no doubt unwilling, to justify this flagrant instance of cruelty on moral principles, has yet endeavoured to find some motive for the act, which may, as he thinks, have the effect of lessening its criminality. This conduct of Romney, in leaving a young family unprotected in a remote part of the kingdom, is ascribed to a romantic spirit of enterprize, and to the desire of improving his mind and his circumstances; but that "beholding in an innocent wife a supposed impediment to every splendid project, he resolved, instead of settling as a family man, to wander forth alone into the distant world in quest of professional adventures."

Such is the sophistry by which the

violation of the first of duties is made instrumentally expedient, if not actually necessary, to the attainment of distinguished eminence in an intellectual and liberal pursuit. But allowing all that the partiality of friendship can require in behalf of an esteemed object, we may be permitted to express our concern and indignation at the continuance of this separation, when the only reason ever offered for it had ceased to operate, and when that eminence was completely attained, for which the connubial state and parental endearments had been so long and strangely sacrificed. It might have been expected that a man of such exquisite sensibility as Romney is described, would, on entering into the possession of a noble mansion, and the enjoyment of an ample income, have eagerly called his family to town, there to participate in his good fortune. But the case was otherwise, and while the artist lived in splendour, visited by persons of the highest

rank, and earning between three and four thousand a-year, his meek and unoffending partner remained without any attempt to injure him by an exposure of her wrongs; though such was her condition, that she would gladly have received the scraps which fell from his table.

Yet of this very man, the indiscretion of kindred genius has ventured to record, that "in conversation he was often delightfully eloquent, particularly in describing to a friend pathetic scenes in humble life, which he often explored; sometimes for the purpose of discovering new subjects for his art; and frequently for the nobler purpose of relieving distress; for no man could be more tenderly alive, both to the duty, and the delight of generous compassion, and evangelical charity!"

However tender might have been the feeling, or extensive the bounty of Romney, he certainly paid no attention to the consideration, that "charity begins at

home," a maxim, which though too often perverted to the low purpose of screening a niggardly disposition, under the specious plea of prudence, contains a sound moral truth equivalent to the solemn declaration of an evangelical writer, who practised what he taught—" if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

The charity of Romney was any thing but that which it is said to have been, for it was utterly destitute of religious principle, and had its origin in the school of sentimentalists, where feeling is substituted for duty, and the breach of one obligation finds a covering in an excessive sensibility. Severe as these remarks may probably be deemed, they are called for by the circumstance, that while the painter lived apart from a worthy woman, to whom he was bound by the most sacred ties, he lavished his bounty on one who was above twenty-five years younger

than himself, and with whose character he could not fail to be acquainted.

A colour, however, has been given to this connexion, for the purpose of making it appear to have been nothing more than pure disinterested generosity on the one side, and filial attachment on the other.

The biographer of Romney has touched this subject with an art, which manifests uncommon anxiety to relate what may be fairly told, without leading the reader to suspect the real nature of this attachment.

"The talents which nature bestowed on the fair Emma," says the historian, "led her to delight in the two kindred arts of music and painting. In the first she acquired great practical ability; for the second she had exquisite taste, and such expressive powers, as could furnish to an historical painter an inspiring model for the various characters, either delicate or sublime, that he might have occasion to

represent. Her features, like the language of Shakespeare, could exhibit all the feelings of nature, and all the gradations of every passion, with a most fascinating truth, and felicity of expression. Romney delighted in observing the wonderful command she possessed over her eloquent features; and through the surprising vicissitudes of her destiny, she ever took a generous pride in serving him as a model: her peculiar force and variation of feeling, countenance, and gesture, inspirited and enobled the productions of his art. One of his earliest fancy pictures, from this animated model, was a whole length of Circe with her magic wand. It could not be painted later than the year 1782, as I recollect a letter from a friend in that year, describing the very powerful impression made by this picture on a party who then surveyed it. Some years afterwards, I had a conversation in Romney's gallery on the same picture, with an opulent nobleman, now no more, who

discovered a faint inclination to purchase it, but it was reserved for a purchaser of superior taste. A Calypso, a Magdalen, a Wood Nymph, a Bacchante, the Pythian Priestess on her tripod, and a Saint Cecilia, were all drawn from the same admirable model." *

According to this statement, the single motive by which the artist was led to give so many proofs of his admiration of this young female, was simply professional: and yet, in a subsequent part of this very narrative, we find Romney expressing his concern, in the most lively terms, at the idea of being regarded by her with indifference. It is impossible, indeed, to believe for a moment that a man so susceptible of tender impressions, as he is represented, should have had so many familiar interviews with a lovely young woman in his own house, for the sole purpose of exhibiting her in various characters. A supposition so perfectly stoical can never

* Life of Romney, p. 119.

be admitted as coming within the limits of probability, by any one who has made human nature his study; and by those who ever had the slightest knowledge of the parties, it will be treated as a most extravagant idea, that Romney, who had abandoned his wife, and lived in luxury, should receive such a visitor at all seasons, and behold her in every luscious attitude, from the mere wish of improving his own genius. But in truth, had the artist been possessed of that charity which is ascribed to him, he would have seen the gross impropriety of placing an interesting young woman, in characters which could not be even represented without a wantonness of countenance, habiliment, and attitude, wholely repugnant to the delicacy of sentiment, meekness of look, and modesty of action, which constitute that charm, so beautifully pourtrayed by the poet, in his description of the mother of mankind:

Grace was in all her steps, heav'n in her eye,
In every gesture, dignity, and love.

Of the numerous pictures of Emma, painted by Romney, one of the most pleasing represents her as viewing the sensitive plant, with a mixture of surprise and delight. This piece, which is in the possession of Mr. Hayley, has been twice engraved, and that gentleman relates its history in the following manner:—

"During my visit to Romney in November, 1786, I happened to find him one morning contemplating by himself a recently coloured head on a small canvas. I expressed my admiration of his unfinished work in the following terms:—'This is a most happy beginning: you never painted a female head with such exquisite expression: you have only to enlarge your canvas, introduce the shrub mimosa, growing in a vase, with a hand of this figure approaching its stem, and you may call your picture a personification of sensibility.' 'I like your suggestion,' replied the painter, 'and will enlarge my canvas immediately.'—'Do so,' I

answered with exultation, on his kindly adopting my idea; 'and without loss of time I will hasten to an eminent nurseryman, at Hammersmith, and bring you the most beautiful plant I can find, that may suit your purpose."*

Granting, as every one must, that this portrait indicates an uncommon sweetness of expression, and great liveliness in the countenance; still it would be very difficult to shew in what respect it can be considered as peculiarly marking the characteristic of sensibility, or how it is at all deserving of that appellation, unless it be in a punning association of the figure and the plant. No man of genuine taste can suppose that the true exquisite feeling, which is moved by the happiness or the sufferings of others, can be properly expressed by contemplating an inanimate shrub or beautiful flower, which is wholly destitute of any thing that can excite joy or sorrow.

* Life of Romney, p. 121.

With this picture of Emma, as the representative of a virtue, to the reality of which, through life, she was an absolute stranger, though at any time she could easily assume the appearance of it, the connexion between her and the painter shall for the present be closed; leaving him to the influence of those beauties of person, and especially to that charming voice, which lulled in him every serious reflection, by the dulcet strains of harmony, and the syren song of pleasure, agreeable to the language of the amatory poet,

Music so softens and disarms the mind,
That not an arrow does resistance find:
Thus the fair tyrant celebrates the prize,
And acts herself the triumph of her eyes.

WALLER.

CHAP. IV.

There is in human nature generally more of the fool than of the wise; and therefore those faculties by which the foolish part of men's minds is taken, are the most potent of all.

BACON.

AT a time when the modern Phryne was the favourite model of artists, particularly Romney and Tresham, she lived apparently by her needle, and with such an appearance of simplicity, as entirely to disarm the neighbours of all suspicion. Yet under a plain and almost a rustic garb, with looks of modest diffidence, and a voice of persuasive mildness, were concealed the complete knowledge of all the arts of pleasure, and every propensity to the indulgence of her passions.

Having once condescended, as an ingenious writer expresses it, to become the living representative of the most voluptuous characters of the Grecian mythology, she made no scruple of giving to each libidinous figure all the force and attraction of the naked truth.

Thus, if she contributed in any way to the improvement of the fine arts, it certainly was at the expense of moral decency; and though the genius of her admirers might perhaps profit by her versatile powers, elegant form, and extraordinary accomplishments, their sentiments must have suffered by the exhibition.

It is indeed a question of serious import, how far the representation of meretricious objects, whatever may be their beauty and expression, can have a tendency to enrich science, or to instruct the student. Perfection in the imitative arts is purchased at a dear rate, when the means of acquiring it are to be sought in the haunts of impurity. Besides the false taste which such a course is likely to pro-

duce in the artists themselves, the practice is necessarily most injurious to the unhappy beings whose personal charms are made subservient to the desire of professional improvement. But much more in fact has been vaunted on the moral effect of these pursuits, than ever can be proved to have resulted from them, either to those who have distinguished themselves by the excellence of their works, or to the persons by whom they have been most admired and patronized. Lascivious beauty in a picture cannot possibly be painted, without correspondent ideas to those which it is intended to excite in the beholder, while the object who is chosen for a model on this occasion will naturally infer from the action and the effect produced, that vice is neither odious in itself, nor hurtful to society.

In the present instance, it is certain that the variety of characters sustained, and the captivating attitudes assumed to diffuse a bewitching allurement into the form and expression, suited to the per-

sonification of a Calypso, a Bacchante, or a Venus, were attended with pernicious consequences to a female, who, in her attempts to excel in this particular line, lost the sense of virtue, and became completely skilled in the arts of intrigue and duplicity.

Though naturally sensual, extravagant, and ambitious, she had so effectually obtained externally the command over her passions at this period, as to preserve an air of modesty, even while engaged most eagerly in voluptuous pursuits. She appeared, indeed, to be the child of nature, perfectly unconscious of the least design, and to her might have been applied in every respect the very striking and animated description of an intriguing female drawn by the masterly pencil of the comic poet:

Coquet and coy at once her air,
Both study'd, though both seem neglected;
Careless she is, with artful care,
Affecting to seem unaffected.

With skill her eyes dart every glance,
Yet change so soon, you'd ne'er suspect 'em;
For she'd persuade they wound by chance,
Though certain aim and art direct 'em.

She likes herself, yet others hates,
For that which in herself she prizes;
And while she laughs at them, forgets
She is the thing that she despises.

CONGREVE.

By this uncommon address, she contrived to draw into her lure one who was supposed to have been equally skilled in the mystery of deception with herself, and who, though he was enthusiastically devoted to the fine forms after the Grecian model, yet was as inconstant to each object of attraction, as the flitting insect, which, ranging in every direction where the loveliest odours are exhaled, settles upon none of the objects by which they are produced.

Strange, however, it is, that this honourable member of the house of War-

wick, was for once completely deceived, and caught in his own toils. The bird-lime of Emma's charms, heightened by the apparent simplicity of her manner, and certainly not rendered the less attractive by her peculiar neatness in dress, fixed the roving mind of Mr. Charles Greville so effectually, that he left no artifice unessayed to gain possession of what he really imagined to be an uncropt flower, "blushing unseen, and wasting its sweetness in the desert air."

Too much practised in the ways of the world, and but too well acquainted with the avenues that lead to the female heart, this man of fashion, who prided himself as much on account of his amours as on his collection of pictures, and his exquisite taste in the fine arts, became perfectly enamoured of the lovely and innocent nymph, who happened to cross his path. The inquiries which he made about her residence, gave him such complete satisfaction with respect to the virtue and

industry of this young woman, as to convince him that he had discovered an inestimable treasure, and consequently to inflame his desires. Chilling indifference, and peremptory repulses, by increasing the difficulties of his pursuit, rendered him more impatient and determined. Perseverance he knew would make his attentions at least respected, even though success should not ultimately attend his efforts. By degrees his constancy prevailed: confidence yielded to importunity, and with many promises of fidelity, the lover became rewarded for his assiduity and management. Quite overjoyed at his rare fortune, he next set about cultivating the talents of Emma, which his acuteness could not help discovering, nor his good taste from admiring. Being himself a connoisseur in every branch of polite science, and thoroughly a judge of music, he spared neither time nor expense in providing proper instructions for a per-

son from whose improvement he anticipated new sources of gratification. These lessons could not be more freely imparted than they were gladly received and diligently regarded.

The progress of the pupil gave infinite delight to her honourable admirer; and such was the force of her natural genius. that she contrived every day to evince, as it were, some fresh excellence, by which means his affections became perfectly settled; and a heart naturally volatile, continued to be bound in the soft enchantment, even when the novelty of personal charms had no longer any particular influence. But how successfully art maintained the dominion which beauty had acquired, will appear from a trifling incident that occurred not long after the formation of this connexion. Ambitious of displaying his conquest to the world of fashion, the lover conducted the lovely Emma, dressed out in a very elegant style, to Ranelagh, which was then

the favourite theatre of gaiety and gallantry. Here her form and agility attracted universal attention, and excited so much admiration, that for once she gave way to a natural impulse; and to increase the applause with which she had been flattered, she gave the company some delightful specimens of her unrivalled powers both in musical expression, and flexibility of action. The consequence of all this was, as might be expected, that a convulsive sensation of astonishment and rapture ran through the whole assembly, whose plaudits proved so intoxicating to the object of them, that she redoubled her exertions, and called forth renewed peals of applause. But all these were so many poisoned arrows to the heart of Mr. Greville, who brought her thither rather to dazzle beholders by her beauty, than to gratify idlers by her accomplishments. He now perceived that she was not only fond of adulation, but that she actually courted it, and

was quite in her element, when surrounded by a host of dazzling admirers. This was a very distressing thought to one who had in fact placed his affections on Emma, from the persuasion that her mind was not only uncontaminated by the folly of the gay world, but wholly ignorant of the art of gaining its admiration. Being now more than half suspicious of the deception which had in reality been practised upon him, he returned home in a pensive mood; and so completely overpowered were his feelings, that he could not help expressing them, with strong emotions of concern, at the manifest inclination which she had shewn to "please fools rather than to respect his sentiments."

Any other woman than Emma would on such a reproach have thrown herself into hysterics, or recriminated in language of haughty indignation. But with that superiority of duplicity which always distinguished her, instead of having recourse

to such ordinary expedients, she retired very coolly to her room, and after throwing off all her elegant attire, she put on her original cottage dress, in which she had at first made an impression on the heart of her protector: then returning to the place where he sat, she signified her intention of relieving him from all further uneasiness, by returning to that station where he originally found her, and where, as she said, it would always afford her pleasure to receive him as a friend. The effect of this declaration was electrical: the clouds of jealousy were dispelled in a moment, and the connexion that seemed to be on the very point of disruption, became more closely cemented than ever.

Mr. Greville, who was at that time in an office of considerable distinction, at court, maintained his mistress in a style of elegance corresponding to his rank; and after making every allowance for her situation, and natural turn for expense, it

must be admitted that at this period she deported herself in a manner which gave him and his friends much satisfaction. One of her first acts, when placed in this state of splendour, was to send for her mother, who now assumed, though by what legal claim cannot be clearly ascertained, the name of Cadogan. Pleasing as it is to record this instance of dutiful respect to her parent, from whom she was never afterwards separated during a space of about twenty years, it would be still more satisfactory if the writer could detail correspondent particulars of tenderness towards the fruits of this union. There were three of these children, two girls and a boy: the names of the former were Eliza and Anne: the latter was called Charles, after his father, but the surname of each was wholly fictitious; and even the mother, who always passed for their aunt, for reasons which it would be in vain to enquire, and useless to conjecture, thought proper at this time to take upon herself the name of Harte.

Nothing perhaps can more strongly pourtray the moral and political evil of concubinage, than the insulated and degraded condition into which it unavoidably throws the innocent offspring of such illicit connexions. These unfortunate children rarely enjoy the benefit of parental affection; and to that social friendship which is cemented by the ties of legal consanguinity, they must for ever remain utter strangers. Even when they experience proper kindness, enjoy the advantages of education, and are raised by an adequate provision or a suitable occupation above the fear of want, and the reproaches of the world, still the recollection of their origin cannot but produce momentary uneasiness, and expose them to occasional marks of contempt. Cut off by the immorality of their parents from the privilege of bearing a name which may gain them the respect of their contemporaries, persons of this description are deprived of that powerful incitement to great actions which arises from

hereditary virtue. Instead of this, they have every reason to conceal the particulars of their descent, and for the most part they have but too much cause to bury in oblivion the names of those from whom they derive their being. In general, the pathetic complaint of one who was himself of this wretched class, may be adopted by them all:

> No mother's care
> Shielded my infant innocence with prayer:
> No father's guardian hand my youth maintain'd,
> Call'd forth my virtues, and from vice restrain'd.
>
> SAVAGE.

The truth of this was felt by the children of whom we are speaking; for in England they never knew what parental care was; and when at last they were taken under the protection of the mother, it was by the fictitious plea of an alliance which never had an existence; while on neither side did they obtain the instruction and means of support for which

they had a fair claim on those who gave them birth.

In the year 1789, a revolution took place in the affairs of Emma, which was of the utmost importance to her whole destiny, and ultimately to that of others. Mr. Greville being under the necessity of retrenching his establishment, by a temporary embarrassment in his concerns, endeavoured to convince his mistress of the necessity of a separation, on such terms as could be most accommodating. While this plan was in agitation, Sir William Hamilton, ambassador at the court of Naples, came to London on some private business; and being introduced by Mr. Greville, who was his sister's son, to this accomplished woman, he expressed his admiration of her person and manners with such warmth, as suggested a thought to the nephew of adopting a measure, by which he could both benefit the lady, and rid himself of an expensive burthen. The enchanting

vocal powers of Emma, added to the excellent character which was given of her by Mr. Greville, quite enraptured Sir William, who made an offer, which was readily accepted, of taking her with him to Italy, for the purpose of rendering her still more accomplished. Matters being thus amicably adjusted to the satisfaction of all parties, the lady and her mother soon after quitted England for Naples, to which city they travelled overland by the way of Germany.

CHAP. V.

There is no reason why we should not sometimes blame, and sometimes commend the same person; for as none are always right, so neither is it probable that they should be invariably wrong.

POLYBIUS.

SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON, who discharged the office of envoy at the Neapolitan court for the long period of thirty-six years, was in many respects a very estimable man. He was the foster brother of our venerable monarch, to whom, at an early age, he was appointed equerry, and in whose first parliament he was elected one of the members for the borough of Midhurst. His talents were respectable, and his manners were those of the finished gentleman, which

rendered him, of course, a proper person to act as the representative of his sovereign, in a place which was at that time the continual resort of families of the first distinction. When Sir William, then Mr. Hamilton, succeeded Sir James Grey as the envoy at the court of Naples, that city was the centre of attraction to inquisitive travellers, not only on account of its natural beauties, and the salubrity of the climate, but in consequence of the remarkable discoveries which were daily brought to light in the excavations, where Herculaneum and Pompeii had been overwhelmed by the eruptions of Vesuvius. Among the vast influx of strangers who were drawn every year to Naples, by the desire of beholding these interesting curiosities, there happened, of course, to be many learned and scientific men from all parts of Europe, of whose observations the British ambassador could not fail to profit; while they, on their part, were grateful for his attentions, and soli-

citous of his correspondence. Thus he became a virtuoso, a naturalist, and an antiquary, by the peculiar nature of his situation, and the conversation which perpetually occurred at his table. His judgment, however, was such as enabled him to make a proper use of the opportunities he enjoyed, and he had an active mind, and was not to be intimidated by ordinary difficulties. He explored the beautiful country where he resided with uncommon diligence, and repeated his observations on Vesuvius, and other volcanic mountains, with all the patience and industry becoming the man of science, who is not content with a hasty or superficial inquiry, nor satisfied while any objects remain which he has not completely investigated, or about which the smallest uncertainty may be supposed to exist. The value of such a resident in that part of the world was duly appreciated in his native country, where he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society,

to which distinction he did honour by his important communications to that learned body, and in the volumes of whose transactions they are incorporated from the year 1766 to 1794. Most of these papers are descriptive of the eruptions which the author witnessed, or of districts over which he passed soon after they had been devastated by earthquakes. Separately, Sir William Hamilton favoured the world with a very splendid work, intitled "Antiquités, Etrusques, Grecques et Romaines," illustrated with plates, in two volumes folio. His motive in publishing this valuable collection in a foreign language, might, perhaps, admit of an apology, though it would be very difficult to satisfy any Englishman of the propriety of adopting the French tongue, on a subject which by no means required the assistance of such a mode for the purpose of elucidation, or the advantage of general circulation. Considered as a classical work, the Latin would have been

the most proper vehicle, but when the official situation of the author is taken into the account, it will be hardly possible to advance a single reason why he should have given the preference to the French language on this occasion, when his own was equally copious, expressive, and adapted to the subject. Charles III. King of Naples, certainly evinced more discrimination and sound sense in the disposal of the great work which he caused to be published, relating to Herculaneum, Stabiæ, and Pompeii, in two folio volumes. When the editor, Monsignor Bojardi, who was a learned prelate of the Roman church, waited on the king to receive his directions for the distribution of the copies, which had been printed at the royal charge, in order to be presented to the learned, and deposited in public libraries, the king said to the good bishop immediately, without deigning to notice the French, Spaniards, or Italians, " Give five hundred to the

English." Bojardi, who was a man of liberal sentiments, and far from being unfavourable to our nation, replied with a bow, " In that case, I fear, the rest of Europe must go without their share." To this the king only answered, " Why, then, let the press be set over again."

This monarch, it must be confessed, paid more respect to the scientific character of the English nation, than the ambassador, who chose to publish a magnificent work on a general topic in that very language, which, perhaps, of all others, was the one that he ought to have rejected.

In 1772, our author favoured the world with an octavo volume of " Observations on Mount Vesuvius, and other volcanoes." This subject he pursued still farther, and discussed at great length, four years afterwards, in two folio volumes, bearing the title of " Campi Phlegræi, or Observations on the Volcanoes of the two Sicilies," to which he afterwards added a supplemental volume.

The interests of truth, however, require it to be told, that great as the diligence of the English ambassador was in promoting the knowledge of this branch of natural history, which till his time had not been very accurately explored, his acquaintance with preceding writers on the subject was but scanty, and he had besides so very slender a knowledge of philosophical language, as to be under the necessity of calling in the assistance of others in the arrangement of his observations. The person to whom he was under the greatest obligations for the composition of these works was a monk of Mount Etna. The great merit of Sir William Hamilton consisted in his zealous exertions to bring a valuable accession of discoveries to the store of science, and in giving a liberal patronage to the fine arts. Even before he left his native land, and when he was but a young captain in the Guards, he had evinced his judgment in the formation of a small but valuable cabinet of pictures, some of which were

purchased at the sale of Sir Luke Schaub's gallery, and to which he afterwards made such additions as opportunities offered, and a limited income afforded. It was, in fact, this particular bias of his mind for works of elegance, that led him to seek the appointment which he obtained, and for which unquestionably he was on various accounts eminently qualified. This situation also offered some advantages in another point of view, by enabling so good a judge of antiquities and paintings to make such purchases as would be profitable to himself, and acceptable to his country. Many commissions of this kind were actually imparted to the ambassador by personages of the highest distinction; and so well were they executed by him, as to increase the number of applications from all parts of Europe.

Among the various objects that engaged the particular attention and curiosity of Sir William, the favourite one was

that of collecting, at a considerable expense, the most beautiful vases, especially those of Grecian workmanship. When he had made himself master of a considerable number of these remains, he caused drawings to be taken of the finest specimens, from whence engravings were executed under his own eye, and for the most part in his own house, Of these a fasciculus was published in the year 1791 ; and another of equal, if not superior beauty, four years afterwards. Besides the prospect of lucrative advantage from the sale of the work itself, the author was actuated by another consideration, in which he completely succeeded. The plates were sent to England, that from them some idea might be formed of the rich collection which they represented. A negociation was accordingly entered into, for the purchase of the cabinet at the national expense ; and the royal approbation having been obtained, parliament voted the sum of

seven thousand pounds for this purpose, after which, the vases, bronzes, and medals, according to the catalogue, were appropriately presented to the British Museum. There were not wanting, however, some persons of literary and scientific reputation, who considered the price set upon this collection as far above the real value. The late ingenious Mr. Wedgewood, indeed, took occasion to observe, in an examination before a committee of the House of Commons, that in his manufactory he had produced imitations of the vases, to such a degree of beauty, as, by exportation alone, brought three times the money into England which the originals had cost the nation. But this testimony can hardly weigh any thing in favour of the extravagance of the grant, since it was the consequence of what could neither have been foreseen, nor even contemplated, at the time when the negociation for the purchase took place. It is not a little extraordinary

that the ambassador should, very shortly after the disposal of this collection, have formed another, exceeding the former in number and value. Antiquities of this description must have been very common in that country, to have enabled the collector to quadruple the number of vases in four or five years; yet such was the case; for early in 1796, we find him endeavouring to transfer this fresh stock to Prussia, through the good offices of the Countess of Lichtenau, mistress of Frederick William, which lady was at this period travelling for her health in Italy.

In the manner of conducting this business there certainly was nothing of the dignity of an ambassador, but much of the finesse of a trader in curiosities; for the dealer, in praising his wares, took care to say that the Grand Duke of Russia would be glad of them, but that he did not wish to see them carried so far to the north. Adverting to the sale of his first collec-

tion, Sir William magnified the beauty and number of the present, which, though so vastly superior in all respects, he declared his willingness to part with to his Prussian Majesty, for the same sum as that which he had received from the British parliament for the articles deposited in the Museum. The proposition, however, came to nothing, and most, if not all, of these vases, afterwards found their way to England. That the public minister of a great nation should be impelled by any cause to truck his cabinet for sale in a foreign market, and that too by the brokership of a courtezan, must certainly b considered as a proceeding little in itself, and totally unworthy of the high official character of the person who was driven to such shifts. But, in truth, whatever were the motives by which his Excellency was actuated in these trafficking concerns, he could hardly have said with strict justice, when parting with his treasures, "necessity, not my will, consents,"

since his establishment was liberal, and his fortune more ample than he chose to acknowledge. His purchases at Naples were, indeed, very large, but his profits upon them were so very considerable, that he could not fail to realize a handsome income, during the number of years in which he may be said to have almost enjoyed a monopoly in this peculiar line of commercial speculation. Every picture of value, and every antique gem, were sure of being offered to the English ambassador, in the first instance; and as there were not always persons at Naples who would purchase such articles upon any thing like liberal terms, he, of course, was sure of obtaining many bargains, which, by long experience, and a most extensive connexion, he well knew how to dispose of to the best advantage.

Flattered as our ambassador was by the marked attentions which he had very properly received from the most illustrious personages in all parts of the world, he

had not the smallest reason to complain of any neglect on the part of his own country. His situation was not only highly honourable, but lucrative; and besides the Order of the Bath, he received from his sovereign many testimonies of personal esteem under his own hand.

CHAP. VI.

O you! whom Vanity's light bark conveys
On Fame's mad voyage, by the wind of praise,
With what a shifting gale your course you ply,
For ever sunk too low, or borne too high!

POPE.

THAT Sir William Hamilton was altogether unacquainted with the former circumstances and manner of life of the person whom he now took under his particular care, is scarcely credible; but that a person of his refined talents, experience, and situation, should voluntarily condescend to take the cast-off mistress of another man, and that too of his own nephew, is too revolting to the feelings of human nature to be supposed. The age of this respectable gentleman, his long absence from England, and his con-

fidence in the honour of a near relation, can alone account for an act, which in any other view would equally be a disgrace to his heart and his understanding. But in suggesting the single apology that can be possibly devised for the extraordinary conduct of the ambassador, no excuse will be thereby afforded to those who took an advantage of his liberality and weakness.

There was a want of common decency in the whole transaction, if the parties had a clear knowledge of each other's previous habits and connexions; but on the other hand, if, as is most probable, his Excellency was imposed upon by the artifice of the female, and the disingenuity of her paramour, no language can be too strong to reprobate proceedings, which, besides the gross immorality that marked them throughout, carried the strongest appearance of being a confederacy, to entrap a credulous old man into an imprudent alliance.

Emma improved greatly by the ample instructions which were provided for her, at the charge of the ambassador, who at length became so thoroughly enamoured, as to make her his wife in a private manner. It being, however, necessary, according to the etiquette of the Court of Naples, that she should be acknowledged by the English sovereign, previous to presentation and admission there, Sir William hastened with her to London, early in the summer of 1791, as well to celebrate the marriage, according to the rites of the established church, as to give his lady that honorary distinction which his public situation rendered indispensable. This circumstance serves as an additional proof that the ambassador was in a great degree ignorant of the exact footing on which his nephew and Emma had lived, otherwise it is hardly to be imagined that any man of common sense and delicacy of feeling would venture to bring a woman of such an equivocal de-

scription to the very place, and into circles, where all her former history could not fail to be remembered. The manner, therefore, in which Sir William Hamilton brought forward the object of his choice, however much it might reflect on his judgment, considering the disparity of their years and condition in life, did at least free him from the suspicion of being privy to his own dishonour. It is not to be credited that such a man would take a pride in proclaiming himself a dupe on the subject which of all others renders the mind most tender and alive to the idea of wrong. Yet on the supposition that the ambassador was fully apprised of the precise nature of the connexion that had subsisted between Emma and his nephew, he must have been not only this very dupe, but, what is worse, wholly unconcerned at the scandalous degradation into which he had suffered himself to be inveigled.

A good natured husband may some-

times be induced by the remains of affection to throw a veil over some slight levities, and even to pardon errors of greater magnitude; but there are few indeed, even of the most vulgar and depraved description who will take a pleasure in blazoning their own disgrace.

But while justice forbids us to believe that in the present instance the respect due to personal honour was compromised, on the part of him who was most affected by the folly, no condemnation can be severe enough for those who took a pleasure in countenancing it by their applause.

An authority, however, on which we may rely with full confidence, has given us a curious account of the arrival of this remarkable couple in London, and of the bustle which their intended nuptials occasioned in the circles of fashion. The biographer of Romney, having noticed the hypochondriacism under which the artist laboured at this time, tells us how

very fortunately he was relieved from his complaint.

" An incident most seasonably occurred, which raised to joyous elevation the sinking spirits of the artist, for nature had given him a heart that could most sincerely exult in the good fortune of those he regarded. The fair Emma, whom he had so often painted with admiration and delight, surprised him by an early visit one morning, in a Turkish habit, and attended by Sir William Hamilton.

" Romney had ever treated her with the tenderness of a father, which she acknowledged on this occasion, with tears of lively gratitude, in announcing to him her splendid prospect of being soon married to Sir William, and of attending him to the court of Naples.

" Romney had conceived such very high ideas of the beauty, the talents, and the heart, of this lady, that I believe the joy of a father, in the brilliant marriage of a favourite daughter, could hardly exceed

that of my friend on this occasion. In his letter dated the nineteenth of June, 1791, he says:—

"At present, and the greatest part of the summer, I shall be engaged in painting pictures from the divine lady. I cannot give her any other epithet, for I think her superior to all womankind. I have two pictures to paint of her for the Prince of Wales. She says she must see you, before she leaves England, which will be in the beginning of September. She asked me if you would not write my life:—I told her you had begun it:—then, she said, she hoped you would have much to say of her in the life, as she prided herself in being my model. So you see I must be in London till the time when she leaves town.'

"In another letter, dated July the seventh, he says:—

"I dedicate my time to this charming lady: there is a prospect of her leaving town with Sir William, for two or three

weeks. They are very much hurried at present, as every thing is going on for their speedy marriage, and all the world following her, and talking of her, so that if she had not more good sense than vanity, her brain must be turned. The pictures I have begun are Joan of Arc, a Magdalen, and a Bacchante, for the Prince of Wales; and another I am to begin as a companion to the Bacchante. I am also to paint a picture of Constance for the Shakespeare Gallery.'

"His intended picture of Constance," says the biographer, "was, I believe, never begun, but his Joan of Arc had a countenance of most powerful expression. The head was thought one of the finest that he ever painted from the features of his favourite model."*

So much has been already said of Romney, that any farther remark on the character and conduct of the painter

* Life of Romney, p. 157.

might appear to be invidious. Yet the studied partiality with which these anecdotes are related, and the rapturous language in which the artist speaks of his living model, whom he compliments as "a divinity," ought by no means to pass without censure. Neither Romney nor his friend could be ignorant of the scenes through which this female had passed: what an insult, therefore, must it be to the dignity of the sex to place a person of this description above all woman-kind! If any thing can be supposed to exceed the indiscretion of Romney, it must be that of the biographer, who, without any inducement or reflection, suffered such prurient effusions of his friend's folly to meet the public eye, instead of consigning them, as he should have done, to the flames.

The expected marriage took place soon after by license, and what is observable enough, the bride on that solemn occasion took the name of Harte, though

that by which she had always been known in the country was Lyon; and this she owned herself to be the true one, on meeting with an old fellow servant sometime after the death of her husband.

To account for this conduct, we must suppose, that having, according to the custom of persons in her condition, changed her name, and becoming known to Sir William by that only, she was under the necessity of adhering to it, lest by disclosing the truth, some suspicion might have risen in his mind of the duplicity that had been practised upon him.

It reflects little credit on the leaders of what is called the fashionable world, that they should at this period have been so lost to the sense of decorum, and the respect due to the established forms and orders of society, as to vie with the greatest eagerness for the honour of receiving one whose sole pretension to the distinction lay in a relation that rather served to aggravate than to obliterate the

errors by which it was preceded, and out of which it actually arose. The acquirements in singing and acting which Emma brought from Italy, and the conquest which she had made of a man in high station, now hoary in years, rendered her so very popular among the gay and trifling, that her former situation, as the mistress of a person then living, and the mother of children by him, was either willingly forgotten, or remembered only to produce a laugh at the mutability of fortune. Into one quarter, however, the folly could not penetrate, and a public reception at court was peremptorily forbidden, certainly not from any fastidious adherence to antiquated rules, nor from an unreasonable prejudice against obscurity of birth and poverty of condition, but wholly through that inflexibility of moral principle which scorns to smile at the folly which it disapproves, and avoids giving the least encouragement to vice, out of courtesy to those who have been infatuated by its delusive arts. The

qualifications which obtained this woman the extravagant admiration of the polite circles where she found admittance, were very far from being such as either did any honour to their judgment, or furnished an apology for the conduct of Sir William Hamilton in making choice of her for a wife. The nature of these fascinating accomplishments is well described in a letter from one of those who enjoyed most delight in contemplating them, and who had abundant opportunities of witnessing their powerful effect.

" In my last letter," says Romney to his friend, " I think I informed you that I was going to dine with Sir William and his lady. In the evening of that day there were collected several people of fashion to hear her sing. She performed both in the serious and comic to admiration, both in singing and acting: but her Nina surpasses any thing I ever saw; and I believe, as a piece of acting, nothing ever surpassed it. The whole

company were in an agony of sorrow. Her acting is simple, grand, terrible, and pathetic. My mind was so much heated, that I was for running down to Eartham to fetch you up to see her."* In another letter, the artist gives the following curious anecdote:

"She performed in my house last week, singing and acting before some of the nobility, with most astonishing powers: she is the talk of the whole town, and really surpasses every thing both in singing and acting that ever appeared. Gallini offered her two thousand pounds a-year, and two benefits, if she would engage with him, on which Sir William said pleasantly that he had engaged her for life."

Romney was anxious to paint as many portraits of this favourite model as he could, during her stay in England, and she frequently sat to him for that purpose.

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* Life of Romney, p. 161.

On one occasion, however, the artist being apprehensive that he had lost somewhat of her esteem, was weak enough to whine at her capriciousness of behaviour with the puerility of a lover, instead of treating the person who behaved in such a way with proper contempt. The friend to whom he poured out his silly complaint, and who should have laughed or scolded him out of his ridiculous whimsies, encouraged him in the folly by which he was infatuated, and sent him a copy of verses, to be presented as a propitiatory offering to the offended "divinity."

These stanzas were addressed to Cassandra, which was one of the characters represented by her in a picture painted by the disconsolate artist, whose vapours, however, were dissipated before the verses reached him, and who thus expressed the state of his mind to the author of them.

"Cassandra came to town on the sixteenth, and I did not see her till the

twentieth; so you may suppose how my feelings must have suffered: she appointed to sit on the twenty-third, and has been sitting almost every day since; and means to sit once or twice a-day till she leaves London, which will be about Wednesday or Thursday in the next week. When she arrived to sit, she seemed more friendly than she had been, and I began a picture of her as a present for her mother. I was very successful with it, for it is thought the most beautiful head I have painted of her yet. Now, indeed, I think she is as cordial with me as ever, and she laments very much that she is to leave England without seeing you.

"I take it excessively kind in you to enter so deeply into my distresses. Really my mind had suffered so very much, that my health was much affected; and I was afraid I should not have had power to have painted any more from her: but since she has resumed her former kind-

ness, my health and spirits are quite recovered."

That any one in the situation and of the age of Romney, should have lamented as a distress the apparent coolness of another man's wife, while he was totally unconcerned about the condition and feelings of his own, ought to have excited indignation rather than pity in the mind of his friend. Instead of this, the whole correspondence that passed on the subject has been printed with, some very pathetic remarks on the acute sensibility of the painter, and no moderate encomium on the amiable qualities of the lady.

Neither of the parties merited the praises which have been so profusely bestowed upon them; for at the very time when their deportment to each other calls forth these observations, they were both in circumstances which demanded a very different course of action as some atonement for their past errors. Romney

would have been more properly employed in healing the wounds which he had inflicted on the heart of an unoffending woman, than in running after a Syren, and crying like a foolish boy when she behaved towards him with a little levity. With respect to the object of his admiration, it may he sufficient to say, that the extraordinary elevation to which she had been raised was not owing to any mental grace, but to attractions, which, however powerful they might be in exciting pleasure, were far from having any tendency to promote virtue. When this woman became so unaccountably the wife of a man of rank, her proper line of conduct would have been the study of humility, and of the means of acquiring a meek and quiet spirit befitting her new state, and indicating some concern for the irregularities of her youth. The reverse of all this marked her character at the most interesting period of her life, when many causes concurred to recom-

mend a lowly disposition and a serious deportment, instead of that hilarity and mimicry which procured her the applause of the thoughtless, and confirmed her in the love of vanity and the practice of deception. This may be adduced as an illustration of a passage in one of our oldest poets:

The winde is great upon the highest hilles,
The quiet life is in the vale below,
Who treads on ice shall slide against their willes;
They want not cares that curious artes would know.
Who lives at ease, and can content him so,
Is perfect wise and sets us all to schoole,
Who hates this lore may well be call'd a foole.

CHURCHYARD.

CHAP. VII.

For that fair female troop thou saw'st, that seem'd
Of goddesses so blithe, so smooth, so gay,
Yet empty of all good, wherein consists
Woman's domestic honour and chief praise,
Bred only and completed to the taste
Of lustful appetence, to sing, to dance,
To dress, and troule the tongue, and roll the eye:
To these that sober race of men, whose lives,
Religious, titled them the sons of God,
Shall yield up all their virtue, all their fame,
Ignobly——.

MILTON.

AT the beginning of September, Sir William Hamilton, and his lady, left England for Naples, where, on their arrival, some little difficulty is said to have been experienced with respect to the introduction of the wife of the

ambassador at court, owing to the strict regulations and high ceremony observed by the queen: but if this report be true, certain it is, that the obstacles did not long remain, for in a few months her ladyship was admitted on terms of cordial intimacy at the palace, and at length she succeeded in gaining an entire influence over both their majesties, who frequently visited the English minister in a friendly way, and received her ladyship at all times with the greatest familiarity.

No situation on earth perhaps could have so well suited the mind of this extraordinary woman as Naples, which for gaiety and dissipation stood unequalled by any city or court in Europe. Ferdinand IV. gave himself up entirely to the sports of the field, and to excursions in his pleasure-boats. His great ambition was to be the boldest huntsman in his kingdom, and the most expert mariner in the bay of Naples. On most of his

enterprizing expeditions against the boars and the foxes in the woods and mountains, he was accompanied by his Excellency the English ambassador, who, though above the age of sixty, prided himself on his agility in running, and his skill in shooting. These hunting diversions sometimes continued for several weeks; and Sir William says, in an account of one of them, written to his wife:—"The king has killed eighty-one animals of one sort or other to-day: and amongst them a wolf and some stags. He fell asleep in the coach, and awaking, told me he had been dreaming of shooting. One would have thought he had shed blood enough."

While the king and his favourite courtiers were thus amusing themselves abroad, the queen and her ladies devoted all their time to scenes of pleasure at home. In these festivities, decorum was no more observed than expense was regarded, while in the private entertainments, of

which the wife of the English envoy had often the direction, and in which she rarely failed to be a performer, the utmost latitude was given to every kind of licentiousness. Almost every day witnessed some new amusement; and it seemed as if in this modern Cytherea, the cares of government, and the duties of every station, were considered as subservient to the study of pleasure. The house of the English ambassador exhibited, under the plea of hospitality, a similar round of extravagance; and, at a time when the revolutionary spirit, excited by the commotions in France, was spreading over the continent, the senses of all orders in Naples, as well foreigners as natives, appeared to be steeped in the lethargy of folly, and to have no feeling for any thing but the grossest objects of voluptuary indulgence. Corruption pervaded all the departments of the state; and the manners of the people partook of the principles and example of their supe-

riors. There was no intermediate gradation of honest industry and virtuous independence between pride and beggary; no class of active citizens, that, from a spirit of patriotism, endeavoured to uphold the credit of their country amidst the dissipation of their rulers and the idle habits of the poor. At the eventful period of which we are speaking, the greatest need of economy was requisite in the management of the revenue; and the most vigilant measures were necessary to place the kingdom in a state of respectability and defence; but, instead of being moved by the misfortunes which had fallen upon the other branches of their family in France, their Sicilian majesties continued in the same improvident course which they had pursued many years, and neither instituted any reform in the administration, nor laid the slightest restraint upon their own vitiated appetite for frivolous amusements and sensual indulgence. It is painful to reflect, that

the character of the English nation was considerably injured by the share which our ambassador and his wife took in these follies, being more anxious to cultivate the royal favour, than to support their own dignity, and the honour of their country. Sir William Hamilton did not want talents suited to his high office, but he had lived so long at Naples, and was so much accustomed to the trifling manners of the court, and the wretched condition of the people, that while the one perverted his judgment, the other blunted his feeling. It is no wonder, then, that a man of this easy temper should suffer his young partner to exercise all her art in consulting the inclinations of the queen, when he, at the age of sixty-three, did the same in playing, riding, and sailing, with the king. It is difficult to say which of the two gained the completest ascendency, but there can be no doubt that the influence of the lady was attended with the greatest con-

sequence in many respects; and it may indeed be safely affirmed, that her sway over the mind of the Queen of Naples was so complete, as to amount in effect to a complete sway over the sovereign. Yet, like most friendships of this sort, where the knowledge of dangerous secrets gives an advantage to the inferior, which often provokes resentment on the one side, and insolence on the other, the two personages of whom we are speaking had occasional bickerings, some of which were attended with very strange and indecorous circumstances. The freedom of access to the royal apartment, which had been given to the wife of his Excellency, when she first became a favourite and confidant, proved at last very irksome, by her frequent intrusions when the queen wished to be alone, or when she was engaged in a private conversation with some who did not chuse to have their opinions witnessed by a third party. One day, her Ladyship, going as usual to

the palace, was stopped in her progress through the rooms by a servant, who respectfully informed her that her Majesty was engaged, and desirous of being undisturbed by any visitors. The indignant Emma, who knew that the person thus favoured was a country-woman of her own, and one for whom she felt a great dislike, made light of the prohibition, and forced her way into the presence without the least ceremony. Such a flagrant breach of decorum could not well pass without resentment; but unfortunately, in the present instance, the rudeness on the one side excited a storm of fury on the other, and a blow from the queen, applied not very gently on the face of the intruder, produced another in return, to the great astonishment of the attendants, who rushed in to separate the combatants. But this strange conflict, which in any other court would have been deservedly followed by a degree of perpetual exclusion, was productive of no other

consequences than a little idle discourse among the people of Naples, and some merriment on the part of the king, and his confidential companions. The temporary gloom occasioned by this affair was very soon dispelled, and her Ladyship returned to court, apparently in as much favour as ever. It is not to be supposed, however, that the queen was so totally regardless of what was due to her dignity, as to forget the outrage that had been committed, and the insult which she had received; but an imprudent familiarity having brought the parties on a kind of level, which became more fixed by their mutual acquaintance with each other's conduct, an act of oblivion took place, and a reconciliation was effected.

Among other persons of distinction, who made Naples their principal residence, a little after the marriage of the ambassador, the late Earl of Bristol was one of the most conspicuous. This eccentric nobleman, who was both a

spiritual and a temporal peer, being for many years Bishop of Derry, spent all his time in foreign countries, to the entire neglect of his diocess, though it is one of the richest in Ireland. The prelate, who was somewhat advanced in years when Sir William Hamilton returned from England with his lady, presently became enamoured with her person and accomplishments. This perhaps may be considered by some of her admirers as an evidence of her merits; but when the character of his Lordship is known, and his letters are considered, the attachment will be found to reflect no more credit on his understanding, than it did honour to the object of his esteem. Though an ecclesiastic of such high station in the church, the bishop was an avowed sceptic in religion, the doctrines and institutions of which he would not scruple to ridicule in the company of women, treating even the immortality of the soul as an article of doubt and indif-

ference. He affected a peculiar singularity in his dress, generally wearing a white hat, and a coat of coloured silk, so as to have very rarely the smallest external sign of the episcopal function, and never shewing in his conversation the least degree of that gravity which became his age, rank, and profession. Besides giving encouragement to every kind of fashionable amusement, he kept a box at the Opera; and even the diversions which in Italy are freely practised on Sunday evenings excited in him the smallest concern.

He commonly abroad went by the title of the count bishop, and his company was greatly courted on account of his lively conversation, blunt freedom, and the fund of anecdote which he possessed. Being on a visit to a friend in 1782, he related the following pleasant story of himself: that going to the Grande Chartreuse, whilst the society were at dinner, he found the convent door shut,

and, on knocking, the porter told him that no one was permitted to enter while the monks were at their meals: upon this, he gave the porter a letter to the abbot from a neighbouring bishop, who had sent this recommendation, in which the bishop called him his brother, the Bishop of Derry. Immediately after the letter was delivered, the doors flew open, and the whole convent, on their knees, met his Lordship, craving his blessing; which he, without any ceremony, delivered to them as he passed along. The good brotherhood were wholly ignorant where Derry was situated; and relying upon the testimonial which he brought, they of course took him for a catholic bishop. Without attempting to undeceive them, his Lordship blessed them all, throwing out his benedictions very gravely with his hands. When the monks became better informed of his character, they had no doubt a very different opinion of the efficacy of his benedictions.

At the time when Lord Bristol was at Naples, living on the most familiar footing with the ambassador, an illustrious personage of this kingdom visited that city, where he was entertained with all the respect due to his high rank. One evening, there was a very splendid party at his Excellency's hotel, and among the rest Mrs. Billington, with several other persons of eminence in musical science, both as singers and performers. The treat afforded by such a combination of taste and talent was of course very great; but in some of the finest airs, the young prince, from a natural vanity, and judging himself to have a very fine voice, marred the music, by interposing his own powers, in the way of helping those who would have been better pleased by his silence. The Bishop of Derry, who was naturally impatient and volatile, bore all this for some time, with only now and then muttering a peevish pish or two; but at length the interruptions became

so annoying, that he could contain himself no longer, and turning to the royal singer, he said, "Pray cease: you have the ears of an ass." This coarse censure, however, produced no other effect than to stimulate the performer to fresh exertions; and he ventured to sing one or two songs for the entertainment of the company, who were, or affected to be, uncommonly delighted, except the bishop, who, scorning to pay a compliment at the expense of his veracity, said to a lady that sat next to him, loud enough to be heard by every one in the circle, "This may be very fine braying, but it is intolerable singing."

Of his uncommon freedom of speech, indeed, we may form a judgment from his behaviour at a public dinner given in Germany, by the late King of Prussia, to the Duke of Brunswick, and several of the princes of the empire, after the peace concluded by that sovereign with the French Republic. The Bishop of

Derry, being offered some capon, declined it, on which the King of Prussia asked him whether he disliked that dish: "Yes, Sire," replied he: "I have an aversion to all neutral animals."

This pointed attack on the truckling politics of the Prussian monarch, brings under our observation the history of his mistress, the unfortunate Countess of Lichtenau, whose origin was nearly as low as that of the heroine of these Memoirs. The countess, in the year 1795, visited Italy for her health, and while at Naples, she contracted a great intimacy with Sir William Hamilton and his lady, through Lord Bristol, with whom she had been acquainted in Germany, and who kept up with her a very extraordinary correspondence. It was during the residence of the countess at Naples, that the English ambassador endeavoured, by her interest, to dispose of his second collection of vases to the King of Prussia, representing them as being not only valua-

ble in the light of antiquities, but particularly serviceable to the improvement of the china manufactory in that monarch's dominions. The negociation, however, came to nothing; but the friendship of the ladies continued to be very warm, at least as long as the countess remained in that country. As letters are very often an index to the character of the writer and correspondent, the following curious billet will serve to elucidate pretty clearly the group of friends therein mentioned, and particularly the principles of the Bishop of Derry, of whom the writer speaks in language very near approaching to blasphemy.

" *Naples*, 29*th March*, 1796.

" My very dear Friend,

" I desire most anxiously to hear from you, how your health is, and when you will return among us. The good and beneficent Lord Bristol, who is in despair at not seeing you, waits your arrival

with the same solicitude as the Jews looked for the coming of our Lord among them. My husband salutes you with all his heart. The good and sincere Denis speaks of no one but you, and we all join in wishing that you may not see *** at Rome, who has been very wicked and dishonourable here; but the particulars are too long to be detailed. I think she will never be permitted to visit here again. She has betrayed the noble family at whose house she was cherished, and has caused therein so much confusion, that it will be very difficult to restore order. Your good heart would suffer to see it. Adieu, dear countess: continue to love your sincere and constant friend,

"EMMA HAMILTON."

The irreligious comparison contained in this epistle, though it shews the levity of the person who wrote it, carries at the same time clear evidence of having been

dictated by the old nobleman himself, who took a delight in such profane allusions, and in playing most irreverently with sacred things. His own letters to the wife of the English ambassador exhibit melancholy instances of this voluntary degradation of character, and scandalous abuse of that trust which demanded at least some outward respect from one, who, while he ridiculed religion in his heart, spent the revenues which he derived from it in foreign lands upon players, buffoons, and women of light reputation.

One of the letters of his Lordship concludes with these delicate lines,

> "O! Emma, who'd ever be wise,
> If madness be loving of thee?"

At another time he says,

"Yesterday we dined on Mount Vesuvius; to-day we were to have dined on its victim, Pompeii: but 'by the grace of God, which passeth all under-

standing,' since Bartolomeo himself, that weather soothsayer, did not foresee this British weather, we are prevented. In the mean time, all this week and the next is replete with projects to Istria, Procite, &c. &c. so God only knows when I can worship again my Diana of Ephesus."

This last indecent allusion, so infamously coupled with an apostolical benediction, has a reference to the part of Diana, which was personated by her Ladyship with great effect, and of which there is an engraving executed at Naples, after a picture painted by the order of her husband.

How justly this prelate has obtained the character of great liberality, will appear from the following unfeeling remarks on the condition of two unfortunate princes, who, without the slightest offence of their own, were driven from their respective countries, by the overwhelming violence of the revolutionary tempest. In July, 1795, his Lordship informs his 'dearest

Emma,' among other articles of intelligence, " that in Amsterdam, and other towns of Holland, there are the greatest insurrections in favour of that fool the Stadtholder. All this, however, can only tend to facilitate peace, but not at all to restore that despicable, odious family of the Bourbons,—the head of which is now at Verona, where we left him eating two capons a-day; ('tis a pity the whole family are not capons!) and, what is more, dressing them himself in a superb kitchen —the true chapel of a Bourbon prince."

After this abominable reflection, which was not more cruel than unjust, on the present amiable and truly religious sovereign of France, who would have expected to see in the same letter such fulsome compliments as these?

" Emma! if that dear Queen of Naples does not write herself to Prince D'Oria for me, I wont look at your beautiful face these six months, ' coute qui coute." At another time, he says of the

modern Messalina, "Send me word, dearest Emma, how the invaluable, adorable queen finds herself. The weather changed so unmercifully yesterday, that Lovel and I both grew ill; and this makes me the more anxious to hear of our too sensible and inestimable queen. My warmest wishes—physical, political, and moral—ever attend her."

Disgusting as these extracts must be to every generous mind, in which the sense of honour and the love of virtue predominate, they are yet not without their uses, particularly as they serve to shew the pernicious consequences that always result to those who abandon the station in which they are placed for a life of greater freedom. This nobleman wholly neglected the duties required of him, both as a lord of parliament, and the bishop of an extensive diocess, to indulge his ease, and to gratify his inclination for pleasure in the soft and bewitching climate of Italy, where worthless parasites

revelled in that bounty which ought to have been appropriated to the benefit of his country, and the relief of the poor. The unsettled life which he led impoverished his mind, corrupted his manners, and destroyed his religious principles. But he suffered for his folly in another respect, by falling into the hands of the French, when they ran over Italy, in 1799; and these unprincipled marauders, without paying the least respect to his rank or age, threw him into the castle of Milan, where he endured a rigorous confinement, about eighteen months, without being suffered the use of pen and ink, or the consolatory visits of his friends. This long confinement to one, who had been so much accustomed to the exercise of travelling, had a fatal effect upon his Lordship's constitution, and he died the same year, with his old friend Sir William Hamilton, to whose widow Lord Nelson, then in the Mediterranean, gave this account.

"There will be no Lord Bristol's table. He tore his last will a few hours before his death. It is said that it was giving every thing to those devils of Italians about him."

Such was the character and end of Frederic Hervey, Earl of Bristol, and Bishop of Derry, who dissipated a long life, a princely fortune, and respectable talents, in the pursuit of pleasure, with all the eagerness, and on the same motive as that which actuated the Epicurean philosophers of old, whose creed and practice were comprehended in the resolution, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

CHAP. VIII.

No levell'd malice
Infects one comma in the course I hold:
But flies an eagle flight, bold, and forth on,
Nor leaves a tract behind.

SHAKESPEARE.

SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON soon found that an imprudent marriage at his time of life brought with it as many cares as pleasures; and he had the mortification of knowing, that the new relation into which he had entered, instead of giving satisfaction at home, was considered so much to his disadvantage, that it was likely to prove the justifiable pretext for his recal.

This may be gathered from a letter, written by the ambassador, while he was

on a hunting excursion with the King of Naples, in which he says, with no small vexation, "You see what devils there are in England! They wanted to stir up something against me; but our conduct shall be such as to be unattackable: and I fear not an injustice from England. Twenty-seven years service—having spent all the king's money, and all my own, besides running in debt, deserves something better than dismission."

Of this complaint, an explanation may be requisite, and it is not difficult to find one that would be ample enough to have warranted the measure, which his Excellency so feelingly deprecated.

The continent of Europe at that period stood in the most critical circumstances, for the progress of the revolutionary principles, which had already succeeded in overturning the constitution of France, could not be supposed by any rational understanding to have a favourable aspect on the peace and happiness of other

nations. If ever, therefore, any time demanded statesmen of pre-eminent talents and virtue at the head of their respective courts, and in the office of ministers from one to another, it was precisely that very era to which our attention is now directed. In former days, perhaps, it mattered not much whether the envoy at the court of Naples was a man of extraordinary intelligence or not, as little more was requisite for the adequate discharge of the duties imposed upon him than great courtesy of behaviour, and a dignified support of the character and honour of his country.

But the tremendous explosion which had now burst forth in the moral world, rendered many radical and extensive changes necessary in the administration of the several governments, particularly in their diplomatic intercourse with each other. Among the rest, Naples was one that stood in great need of an alteration in this respect, and that for the very rea-

son assigned by our ambassador as the ground of his pretensions to his continuance in that situation.

His pursuits and amusements could interfere but little with his public avocations while that part of the world remained tranquil; but the French revolution gave a shock to every establishment, and portended plainly enough to every man, that did not wilfully shut his eyes, a long and sanguinary war throughout Europe. Sound policy, therefore, pointed out the necessity of endeavouring, by means of active, virtuous, and able agents, to rouse the sluggish courts to a sense of their danger, to make them sensible of their proper interests, and to prevail upon them to adopt such measures as were best calculated, by internal reformation and foreign alliance, for enabling them to maintain their independence against a ruthless enemy.

Sir William Hamilton might be an excellent connoisseur in bronzes, medals,

and pictures; but he should at this time have given way to some person of a more comprehensive genius, and one whose mind entered deeply into the circumstances of the times. Instead of that lively and piercing judgment, which, being always on the wing, explores every passing occurrence, to trace the effects which it is likely to produce, the mind of our ambassador exhibited nothing but phlegm, except when in the course of his enquiries some object of great curiosity was offered for his purchase, or he happened to be engaged in the hunting parties of the weak monarch, with whom he chanced to be a favourite. Of the puerile character of Ferdinand, a singular anecdote, related by Sir William Hamilton, in one of his letters written during an excursion with his Majesty, will furnish a striking instance.

"Yesterday, the courier brought the order of St. Stephano, from the Emperor, for the Prince Ausberg, and the king was

desired to invest him with it. As soon as the king received it, he ran into the prince's room, whom he found in his shirt, and without his breeches; and, in that condition, was he decorated with the star and ribbon by his Majesty, who has wrote the whole circumstance to the emperor.

"Leopold may, perhaps, not like the joking with his first order. Such nonsense should, certainly, be done with solemnity; or it becomes, what it really is, a little tinsel, and a few yards of broad ribbon."

This was, no doubt, a very strange and imprudent act of levity at a time when so many successful attempts were making to level all distinctions in society, and to represent even crowns, and mitres, sceptres and croziers, as nothing better than the baubles of childish superstition, or the ensigns of an arbitrary usurpation of the common rights of mankind. But if the King of Naples acted on this occa-

sion in a manner unbecoming the respect due from one sovereign to the institutions of another, the conduct of our ambassador cannot be altogether excused, in writing as he did on the subject. Slight incidents will sometimes illustrate the real character of men, much more certainly than a long train of public actions. Sir William, in bestowing this contemptuous appellation on the principal of the imperial orders, paid no flattering compliment to the red ribband with which he was himself decorated; and though a man of sense will despise the folly of those who court such distinctions for the mere sake of shining above others, he will not on that account cast an odium on institutions, which, however unworthily they may have been bestowed, were originally intended as the rewards of merit, and still continue to be the badges of royal approbation. The freedom with which the ambassador imparted state secrets, and his opinions on

public men and affairs, to his wife, within a few months after his marriage, cannot be justified by the high opinion which he entertained of her fidelity and the acuteness of her understanding. This very woman he knew had been already honoured with the particular notice of Ferdinand, who endeavoured to gain her favours by the offer of a *carte blanche* for the statement of her own demands.

This paper, with the several letters which the king had written to her, were, most respectfully, and with much feeling expression, put by her into the hands of the queen, who either was, or pretended to be, very much affected by so extraordinary an instance of virtue and liberality. It is, however, to be feared, that there was more art than sincerity on both sides, for the one well knew that her safest course lay in making a friend of the queen, rather than in shining as the favourite of a monarch, who could hardly be said to be his own master; while her

Majesty, who cared as little about the amours of her husband, as she did about the propriety of her own conduct, thought that by attaching such a person to her interest, she should be able to gratify her love of pleasure, in a variety of ways, without the least observation. Nor was this all; for though these two uncommon females, both equally voluptuous, vain and ambitious, had not the slightest affection for each other, they were sensible that the appearance of an ardent esteem and mutual confidence would be for their respective advantage, and the security of that power which they had but too much reason to apprehend was in a perilous state.

The queen, who was really a woman of sharp intellect, could not be altogether unconcerned about the terrible scenes which were passing in France; and she knew that in the event of the flames of war spreading into Italy, the chief if not indeed the only security her dominions

could hope for lay in an alliance with Great Britain. Our ambassador was already under some apprehension of being recalled, and of this the queen herself was not ignorant. She, therefore, had reasons to dread such a change, because whoever might be appointed the successor, it was impossible that he could remain any time at Naples, without witnessing the corruptions of the court, the depravity of the people, and the absolute necessity of procuring something like a renovation of the state.

Her Majesty had been now acquainted with Sir William Hamilton much above twenty years, and from him she had nothing to dread, for which reason she felt it necessary to exert herself to the utmost in rendering the situation agreeable to him at this crisis, and to secure his residence at Naples, by all her influence at the courts of Vienna and Madrid. Sir William was in consequence not only distinguished by numerous marks of fa-

vour, but his lady became the confidential friend of the queen, who occasionally imparted to her information of such importance, as when communicated to the government at home, removed from ministers all idea of displacing an agent who had given them the best proofs of his penetration and intelligence.

Thus, the intimacy which subsisted between these celebrated women, was cemented by duplicity, and arose solely from selfish motives, without having any real direction to the public weal of either country.

Had the Queen of Naples, who at that time, and long before, stood at the head of affairs, been actuated by the smallest degree of parental love for her subjects, she would have turned her thoughts to the correction of abuses in the administration, and to the organization of the best means by which the kingdom might be most effectually defended by its resources. But nothing was further from her

thoughts; for though she hated the republican principles of the French, as directly tending to subvert every throne in Europe, she always regarded with abhorrence the only proper means that could be devised for the security of that where she was placed. Having been long habituated to the exercise of power, and for many years practised in the ways of sensual pleasure, she had a numerous train of nobles to gratify with great places of trust, and particular dependents of all sorts to support by pensions. Instead, therefore, of making any sacrifices for the public good, or laying a restraint upon her vicious inclination, at an awful crisis, when the fate of her nearest relations was in a state of dreadful suspense, she listened only to those who, like herself, considered the nation in no other light than as a vast reservoir purposely created for the supply of luxuries to pamper their appetites.

To uphold the authority of the court,

and to prevent the introduction of those doctrines, which were calculated to make the people acquainted with the reciprocal duties of sovereigns and subjects, the claims of the one, and the rights of the other, a most enormous and expensive system of espionage was carried on, by which the government became terrible without adding to its security.

Such was the country where Sir William Hamilton, after a residence of near thirty years, was most anxious still to remain in his official capacity, though he was sensible of the disorders which pervaded the kingdom, and aware of the dangers by which it was surrounded. It was natural perhaps for the ambassador to feel a strong partiality for a place where he had so long enjoyed ease, honours, and pleasure; nor can he be blamed for the feeling which he expressed at the bare report of his being superseded. Old age contracted in one office does not commonly bring with it a conviction of

its own infirmities, nor do the changes that take place in the sphere where a man has long moved induce a suspicion that he who has lived to behold them may have had correspondent ravages in his own mind and person. So long as he enjoys health and spirits, he considers these things as matters of ordinary occurrence; and instead of taking a hint from the revolutions which he beholds, to retire in time, he adheres more closely to his situation, assigning as his reason for this determination the years he has already spent in the office, and the experience which he has already acquired. Thus it was in the present instance, though nothing was more easy than to have shewn that the grounds alleged for the residence of Sir William Hamilton at Naples were such as proved the necessity of his recall. During his long abode in that place, the character of the court, and the state of the nation, had been greatly degraded; and of late years this deterioration had

proceeded with a velocity that ought to have made an intelligent and virtuous observer more disgusted at such a sink of debauchery, than desirous of continuing to witness its folly and its downfall. But, like the patriarch of old, the ambassador had been now so long accustomed to the scenery and manners of Naples, that he could not bear the idea of withdrawing from it, though the political hemisphere already began to give alarming symptoms of pouring down an overwhelming torrent on that and all the neighbouring states.

Wrong as it was in Sir William to cling thus closely to his appointment, at a juncture which was pregnant with events, against which he could be ill provided by his studies and habits, still greater blame attaches to the councils of those who complied with his wishes in continuing him, when they ought to have been sensible that an energetic administration at home must be crippled in its exer-

tions, if it does not employ legations of a similar character abroad. Unfortunately, however, while the greatest zeal was manifested by the English government for the preservation of social order throughout the family of Europe, the good intentions of our ministry were frustrated by the superior talents of the agents which were employed in foreign courts by the other powers. It may seem strange that political discussions should take place in such a memoir as the present, but as great events often spring from little causes, there will be no difficulty in shewing that the marriage of Sir William Hamilton, and his consequent reluctance to quit Naples for England, brought after it a train of momentous circumstances, which ended in a separation of the once united kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Our design here is somewhat above that of affording a little momentary entertainment to the lovers of anecdote, and those who take a delight in reading the details

of human folly and depravity. Even the intrigues of Cleopatra, her vice and extravagance, might have been buried in oblivion, had it not been for their great political effects, the history of which could not well be understood without a minute account of her character, and a narrative of her conduct and connexions. Differing in degree, but corresponding in disposition and adventures, the wife of the English ambassador at Naples has obtained, and will continue to occupy, a place in history, which therefore gives the particulars of her life more importance than such a subject could otherwise possess.

Sir William Hamilton and his lady both chusing, for many substantial reasons, to remain in Italy rather than to return to their native country, laid themselves out with the greatest assiduity in cultivating the favour of the king and queen, who on their part were, for reasons just as liberal, equally desirous of retaining

his Excellency at their court. The ambassador accordingly did all that lay in his power to gain the personal good-will of the monarch, by presenting him with double barrelled guns, procuring brass carronades for his yacht, and, what was worse, by spending that time in field sports which ought to have been employed in counteracting the influence of the French, German, and other agents, and in endeavouring to infuse an energy into the Neapolitan government, by laying before every member of it a full exposition of the evils which threatened the existence of the state. The apathy of Sir William at this eventful period was rendered still more culpable by the part which he suffered his lady to take in the private concerns and pleasures of the queen, to whose propensities and connexions he was far from being a stranger. The palace of Naples might indeed have rivalled that of Agrippina, in the nature and variety of wanton amusement, the arts made use of to

gratify the worst passions, and the utter disregard of every divine and human law, with respect to the means of indulging a vitiated appetite. Nor did that government in tyranny and cruelty fall short of the Roman empire in its worst state; as the following instance will sufficiently prove. There was an English banker at Naples, of considerable reputation, and who was indeed equally respected by natives and foreigners. On this person the English ambassador was accustomed to draw his bills, and Lady Hamilton did the same, by her husband's permission. But her demands in this way became at length so quick and exorbitant, that Mr. Mackinnon, the banker, though he had authority to advance money on a public account to his Excellency, thought it prudent to refuse compliance with her Ladyship's order, till he should receive further instructions.

Whether this act of resistance to her will produced what followed, must be

left to the judgment of the reader; but so it was, that the next day a file of musketeers surrounded the banker's dwelling, and having taken Mr. Mackinnon into custody, carried him to the castle of Uovo, where he was plunged into a dungeon, exposed to every nuisance, and suffering the alternate extremes of a burning sun in the day, and the keen severity of the cold winds during the night. After remaining in this durance some time, without either knowing the cause of his confinement, or having the means of bringing his case before a legal tribunal, a basket of iced fruit was brought him one day as a present. This article of luxury, which is always a choice treat at Naples, could not fail to prove very acceptable to one who had been compelled to live on the coarse fare of a prison. Mr. Mackinnon, however, having experienced some civilities from the officer of the guard, fortunately gave him an invitation to partake of this agreeable entertainment. The officer, looking at

the fruit, and then at the prisoner, asked him how it was possible that any man, who had lived at Naples so long as he had done, should think of receiving conserves, or any thing of this kind, from unknown persons; on saying which, he gave some of the contents of the basket to an animal, which died in convulsions in a few minutes.

The worthy gentleman, whose life was thus attacked by the most infamous means, contrived to make his escape by the assistance of some friends, who sent into the castle one day a large basket, or hamper, filled with clothes. Soon after, one of the strongest porters in Naples was employed to bring out this basket, in which the banker was deposited, covered with linen so effectually as to be completely concealed. The porter staggered under his load till he came outside the castle, and on reaching a low and narrow bridge, he placed the basket on the parapet, where it actually rocked to and fro by the violence of

the wind, which blew very hard from the sea. Luckily, however, the labourer, after resting a little while, and execrating his heavy burthen, took it again upon his shoulders, and arrived safely at the place appointed, without meeting with any molestation. It may naturally be supposed that Naples was no longer a safe residence for one who had thus eluded the vengeance of his enemies; and Mr. Mackinnon accordingly made the best of his way out of a country which was overrun with spies, and wholly destitute of justice.

CHAP. IX.

A rebellion or an invasion alarms and puts the public upon its defence; but a corruption of principles works its ruin more slowly perhaps, but more surely.

BERKELEY.

THE murder of the virtuous but too gentle Louis XVI. and of his accomplished queen, by the wretches who profaned the name of liberty in France, seems at last to have roused the Neapolitan court to some apprehension of their danger; and when the war broke out that year, this state made a common cause with the other powers against the new republic, which threatened to annihilate every monarchy in Europe.

In August following, the inhabitants of Toulon, and the neighbouring parts,

being wearied out by the sanguinary oppressions of the republican government, determined to throw off the yoke, and to put themselves under the protection of the English. For this purpose a deputation waited upon Admiral Lord Hood, then commanding on that station; and that gallant veteran, having felt the importance of the proposition, very readily acceded to it, at the same time taking every step that he could to preserve the Toulonese from their inveterate enemies. Knowing the necessity of a military force under such circumstances, Lord Hood dispatched Captain Nelson of the Agamemnon to Sir William Hamilton at Naples, requesting his good offices with the government there, to send such a supply of troops as could be spared. On the arrival of the English ship in the bay, the captain waited on the ambassador, who introduced him to their Sicilian Majesties, by whom he was very graciously received. In a letter which the brave

commander wrote to his wife, giving an account of his mission, he says, "Lady Hamilton has been wonderfully kind and good to Josiah," (the son of Mrs. Nelson by her former husband.) "She is a young woman," he adds, "of amiable manners, and who does honour to the station to which she is raised."

Of this first acquaintance, which afterwards proved so extremely important in its consequences, a very strange account has been related by the compiler of a book purporting to be the authentic Memoirs of the Life of Lord Nelson, by a man of the name of Harrison. The statement in that work of the introduction of Nelson to her Ladyship is so palpably contradictory to truth and common sense, that it is a wonder how any person could ever have invented it. Having noticed the surrender of Toulon to Lord Hood, and the arrival of the Agamemnon at Naples, this biographer says,

"In the mean time, Captain Nelson

had been introduced to the king and queen of Naples, from whom he met with a most cordial and gracious reception: nor must his singular previous introduction by Sir William to Lady Hamilton be passed over without particular notice; on the result of which so much of the felicity of this exalted hero's future life seems evidently to have in a superlative degree depended. On Sir William's returning home, after having first beheld Captain Nelson, he told his lady that he was about to introduce a little man to her acquaintance who could not boast of being very handsome; 'but,' added Sir William, 'this man, who is an English naval officer, Captain Nelson, will become the greatest man that England ever produced. I know it, from the few words of conversation I have already had with him. I pronounce that he will one day astonish the world. I have never entertained any officer at my house, but I am determined to bring him here. Let him be put in

the room prepared for Prince Augustus.' Captain Nelson was accordingly introduced to her Ladyship, and resided with Sir William Hamilton during his short stay at Naples; and thus commenced that fervid friendship between the parties, which continued to glow, with apparently increasing ardour, to the last moment of their respective existences, whom it has been Lady Hamilton's severe lot to survive.

" The introductory compliment which had been paid by Sir William Hamilton to Captain Nelson's transcendent abilities, was not ill requited by one of the latter's first salutations of the worthy envoy :— ' Sir William,' said he, in consequence of the dispatch made use of in obtaining the Neapolitan troops, ' you are a man after my own heart : you do business in my own way. I am now only a captain, but I will, if I live, be at the top of the tree.'

"These reciprocal good opinions of each other," continues the pretended historian, "which form the basis of all substantial friendships, could not fail to unite such excellent and enlightened minds in a sincere amity. It can never appear wonderful, then, that Lady Hamilton, herself a person of very considerable talents, and possessing a warm and affectionate heart, naturally attached to splendid abilities, should be forcibly struck with the pleasing manners, extreme goodness and generosity of mind, and evident proofs of comprehensive intellect, which she continually witnessed in the new friend of her intelligent husband, during the few days of his continuance at Naples.

"The frank and friendly attentions of her Ladyship at the same time, it must necessarily be supposed, made no slight impression on the susceptible bosom of Captain Nelson; who was charmed with the characteristic sweetness of disposition

which she so fascinatingly displayed for the promotion of his ease and comforts."*

Some excuse might seem to be justly due to the reader for so long and fulsome an extract, filled with falsehoods from beginning to end; but when he knows that the volumes from whence it is taken were put together under the eye and by the dictation of the very woman who is so grossly flattered in the tale, he will see in the whole romantic representation a complete reflection of her mind.

The simple truth is, that Captain Nelson, bearing his Majesty's commission, and charged with particular dispatches to the English resident, went to his house immediately on his arrival, and was there, as a matter of course, received and entertained with the respect due to his rank. According to the fable, Sir William Hamilton picked the hero up by chance, or

* Life of Horatio Lord Nelson, by James Harrison, Vol. I. p. 107—9.

fell into conversation with him accidentally; and being greatly pleased with his behaviour, gave him an invitation to his house; a circumstance altogether as probable as the prediction which the one is said to have delivered, and the boast which the other is reported to have made: but nothing of the kind took place; nor had the ridiculous story any other authority than the fertile coinage of her Ladyship's brain, and the fine blazoning polish which it received from the amanuensis who was employed in her house at Merton to put together these delectable memoirs. They who knew Sir William Hamilton, must have been better acquainted with his phlegmatic character, than to believe for a moment that he ever caught such a fit of prophetic enthusiasm; and with respect to the naval commander, though it cannot be denied that ambition was his ruling principle, his understanding was at this time too good to suffer him to play the gasconading

part which is here described. Certain it is, that this visit was productive of very great effects; but whether those effects conduced any thing to the felicity or the fame of the hero, remains to be developed in another place. The whole fictitious narrative, however, affords another striking evidence of this woman's extraordinary duplicity, and of the folly with which it was invariably blended, since it cannot but occur to every person of common discernment, that the manner in which Sir William is said to have spoken of his new acquaintance could not be true; and they who are conversant in the etiquette of the service, must know that the entertainment of an officer so employed was a regular act of duty, which could not have been omitted without a breach of good manners. If Sir William Hamilton never received a naval officer as an inmate into his house before Captain Nelson, he must have conducted himself in a very uncourteous manner to

the various gentlemen of that profession, who, during his embassy, anchored in the bay of Naples. But many instances might be adduced to free the English ambassador from this wrong; and there are persons now living, and high in the service, who have experienced at his house entertainment as hospitable as they could have looked for, but to which, indeed, by their station, they had an unquestionable right.

Such a tale, therefore, as the present, destroys itself by forcing upon the calm judgment of the reader some glaring inconsistencies, which cannot be got rid of, without a manifest injury to the parties who are the objects of praise. Notwithstanding this, the last biographer of Nelson, in a compendium abstracted from other collections, purposely to render it a manual for seamen, has been imprudent enough to select this anecdote among others, because it would, if true, serve to shew what an idea was formed

by discerning minds of the peculiar grasp of Nelson's powers, even before he had distinguished himself by any exploits, and of the presentiment which he had of his future elevation at a time when he could have little expectation of the kind. The inclination to invent predictions, and other portents, indicative of the fate of great men, is of very ancient date, and has been carried to an extravagant height in many instances; but if they were all examined with accuracy, and compared with the circumstances to which they relate, most, if not all of them, would sink into the ordinary conjectures of human speculation, or be resolved into the partiality of friendship, seeking for signs and prodigies after the fact.

Nelson sailed from Naples well pleased with the success of his mission, and six thousand soldiers were sent in the fleet, belonging to that government, to co-operate with the English and the royalists at Toulon. But though their Sicilian

Majesties had a radical hatred to the new state of things in France, and were very glad to lend what assistance they could towards the suppression of that anarchy which prevailed there, neither they nor their ministers adopted any course for the reformation of their own states. The capital of the kingdom where they resided still continued to display the same scenes of extravagance and wretchedness of pride and beggary. It is remarkable enough, however, that at this period an Englishman should have had the direction of public affairs at Naples, while two of the same nation possessed the particular confidence of the king and queen. Sir John Acton, a baronet of an ancient catholic family in Shropshire, having entered into the imperial service in 1763, was raised for his services to the rank of major-general: and on being sent to Naples, in 1778, he was there made secretary of state, with the department of the navy and commerce, and the

rank of lieutenant-general. In 1780 the administration of the army was placed under his direction, and in 1785 he was appointed counsellor of state, and knight of the royal order of St. Janiver, and of St. Stephen of Tuscany. Four years afterwards he was made minister for foreign affairs. Sir John Acton was a man of ability, and very much attached to his countrymen, but he had little English feeling, and very imperfect notions of the science of government; for having been so many years in the service of an arbitrary state, and accustomed to nothing but absolute authority on the one hand, and implicit obedience on the other, he scarcely felt the wish to raise the people above their degraded condition. Under the administration of this chevalier, Naples might, at least, have been prepared for a great moral and political change, if he had possessed as much public spirit as private virtue; but unfortunately Sir John Acton, like the English ambassa-

dor, had lived too long out of his native land, and been too much habituated to foreign institutions, to be animated by the desire of promoting the cause of liberty. One of the most obvious and effectual means of regenerating any weak and disordered community is that of encouraging industry; but nothing of this kind took place at Naples, where, on the contrary, a nuisance was not only tolerated, but even countenanced, which in any other state would have been considered as an evil equally injurious to the people, and dishonourable to the government. The Lazzaroni of Naples, consisting of many thousands of vagabonds, without any settled residence or regular occupation, formed a distinct community in that city, not only under the eye of the sovereign, but distinguished by particular expressions of his approbation A conscientious and intelligent minister, who considers himself in the light of a public steward, will see the obligation

under which he lies, to purge out by every means in his power such disorders as tend to injure the public morals, and to disgrace the state. Sir John Acton, however, even at the time when the fearful example of the French revolution glared as a beacon to all the nations around, never once adopted any measure for the removal of this scandalous abuse, though the want of a disciplined army, and an appointed navy, which might have been both thus easily supplied, was perceived and felt every day after the commencement of a war, the issue of which was so uncertain. But the truth is, the Neapolitan court relied more for their defence on the fleets and supplies of Great Britain, than on their own energies and resources.

A country so completely lost to its own character and interest, was, therefore, little deserving of our confidence and support; yet with the generosity which has invariably distinguished this

nation, when called upon by the weaker powers, who have been in danger of coming into collision with the more formidable, Naples was favoured as an ally of importance, and by her arts and promises obtained more notice and greater contributions than she was entitled to, either by her circumstances or fidelity.

At this eventful crisis, when so much depended upon the inherent morality and loyalty of the nations, who hoped to escape the misery into which the people of France had fallen through the corruption of their principles, at such a period it was evident that no state could with justice look for the assistance of other powers, while it remained unconcerned about the symptoms of its own decay. This, however, was the exact case with the kingdom of the Two Sicilies at the commencement of the revolutionary war: and it was equally discreditable to the prime minister there, and our ambassador, that amidst all the horrors of the repub-

lican tyranny, and the apprehensions of invasion, nothing was done to rouse the Neapolitan court or the people to a sense of their respective duties. The former still continued immersed in luxurious habits, and following despicable amusements, while the latter, though attached to their king, on account of his affability and good nature, were without that impulse to great exertions which springs from patriotism, and a grateful sense of personal blessings.

While the English were contending for the liberty and independence of Europe against the modern Gauls, the King of Naples and Sir William Hamilton appear to have been indifferent to the struggle, and unmoved by the perils which were gathering in every quarter. The beginning of 1794 presented an awful prospect, and yet in January of that year the ambassador, being on a hunting excursion, wrote thus to his wife:

"By having grumbled a little, I got

a better post to-day (*i. e.* for shooting); and have killed two boars and a sow, all enormous. I have missed but two shots since I came here: and, to be sure, when the post is good, it is noble shooting!—the rocks and mountains as wild as the boars. The news you sent me of poor Lord Pembroke gave me a little twist; but I have for some time perceived, that my friends, with whom I spent my younger days, have been dropping around me.

"Lord Pembroke's neck was very short, and his father died of an apoplexy.

"My study of antiquities has kept me in constant thought of the perpetual fluctuation of every thing. The whole art is really to live all the days of our life; and not with anxious care disturb the sweetest hour that life affords—which is the present! Admire the Creator and all his works, to us incomprehensible; and do all the good we can upon earth; and take the chance of eternity without dismay."

Private letters, that were never intended for the public eye, are certainly not objects of criticism as compositions ; but the facts which they mention, and the sentiments they convey, afford matter for discussion, as throwing light upon the events of the time, and illustrating the characters of the persons to whom they relate. When we follow the King of Naples among the woods and mountains, we ought to feel no surprise at hearing that his troops behaved like poltroons at Toulon, where their persence did more harm than good to the wretched inhabitants ; nor have we much cause perhaps to censure the backwardness of the Neapolitan Commodore Fortiguerra in that business, especially when it is known, that during the king's absence, a set of foreign agents did all that lay in their power to divide the counsels of this miserable government.

The reflections of Sir William Hamilton on the sudden death of an old acquaintance were certainly not those of a

man whose hopes are full of immortality. They have all the air of Pyrrhonism, and breathe nothing superior to the refined theism of Rousseau, who in his last moments desired to have a look at the sky, that he might feast his expiring vision with objects which he should behold no more for ever.

In the following year the ambassador was busied in arranging a second collection of his vases, of which he published in folio an elegant set of engravings, executed with great spirit and accuracy. About this period, also, he caused a collection of plates to be engraved by Rehberg from paintings representing Lady Hamilton in a variety of characters and attitudes.

Such were the pursuits, the pleasures, and the follies of the English envoy, at a time when his country was embarked in a tremendous conflict, with the foes of order abroad, and struggling hard to prevent a destructive anarchy at home.

In the summer of the next year the

French republican government succeeded in frightening the timid and corrupt cabinet of Madrid into a separate peace; but the negociations were so secretly carried on, that the other powers had no apprehension of such an alienation. Lady Hamilton, however, had the merit of discovering the design before it actually became public, and she lost no time in communicating the intelligence to the nearest commander, who happened to be Captain Nelson.

The manner in which this extraordinary woman obtained possession of this important state secret indicated uncommon quickness of penetration, and great readiness in the choice of means for the accomplishment of her object. Being one day with the king when a packet of letters was brought to him from Spain, she perceived that while he carelessly threw down all as fast as he glanced over them, to his secretary, there was one, which after arresting his attention, he carefully put into his pocket. Rightly think-

ing that this letter contained some intelligence of peculiar interest, her Ladyship the same day bribed the page to take it from his master's pocket during his afternoon's sleep. Having read and hastily copied this letter, which apprized Ferdinand of the intended peace with France, and probable rupture with England, she gave it again to the page, and sent off a dispatch to Captain Nelson, who made a proper use of it.

After this defection of one of our allies, and a general treachery or imbecility in the rest, it was found that we had little chance of preserving the Italian states, when they were so entirely dead to their own interest. Naples, indeed, was one of the last powers that concluded an armistice with the French, which was followed by a treaty, in consequence of the departure of the British fleet from the Mediterranean, and the king on this occasion wrote a letter to Admiral Sir John Jervis, in which he lamented this proceed-

ing very bitterly, and beheld the ruin of his kingdom in the retreat of the British fleet. But as an ingenious writer, in his account of these events, observes, "The court of Naples, owing to the spirit of the queen, who at that time was convulsed at the name of a Frenchman, appeared ready for making exertions for the support of the good cause: but a variety of reasons prevented this court from acting with a corresponding degree of energy. The nation was loyal, but its government had grown feeble: and its statsemen had no fixed principle of integrity."*

* Life of Lord Nelson, by the Rev. J. S. Clarke, &c. Vol. I. p. 251.

CHAP. X.

Blame me not for disrespect,
If I the flatterer's style reject.

GAY.

THE peace concluded by Naples with the French republic, at the close of the year 1796, was far from ameliorating the condition of the nation, or correcting the evils that disordered the government. The king was chagrined, indeed, by a measure into which he had been driven by his necessities, and the queen was disgusted at the appearance of those revolutionary leaders in her capital, who in their own country had brought some of her nearest relations to the scaffold. But these feelings were nothing more than the agitation of impassioned minds,

mortified at sustaining a disgrace which they wanted fortitude to prevent, and virtue to improve. Their Sicilian majesties were indignant at the insolencies of the French generals, and alarmed at the intrigues which were carried on in their territories by the emissaries of that nation. They had also but too much reason to apprehend that the plan of republicanizing all Italy was completely determined on, though, according to the wonted perfidy of the Directory, it was evident, that previous to the accomplishment of this object, each of the states would be exhausted of its wealth, and then cast aside like a squeezed orange.

Yet with these existing evils, by which they were surrounded, and the gulph of ruin that yawned before them, the heads of this government, and the favourites of the court, still continued to pursue their accustomed circle of dissipation; neither changing their own manners, nor instituting any wise and beneficent regulations for the good of the people. Much as the

violence and rapacity of the French must be detested by every liberal mind, and despicable as their pretences to liberty truly were, still it cannot be denied that their progress in many countries had a tendency to open the eyes of the oppressed inhabitants to those abuses which had facilitated the success of the republicans, and given them so many advantages over ancient establishments. The lower orders of the people could not help repining at their own degraded condition, nor avoid observing the corruptions of their rulers, who were without energy to prevent danger, and who, when it came, had no sentiment of feeling for any but themselves.

No nation can sink so completely into ignorance and imbecility, as to render the mass of the population wholly indifferent to oppression, or contented with their own abject poverty, while they see their lords rioting at ease, and indulging in every luxury.

So long as Naples enjoyed the advan-

tages, political and commercial, of an alliance with Great Britain, the inhabitants had many sources of profit, the benefit of which made the greater part less sensible of the radical evils of their government, and careless about the scandalous immoralities of the court. But when the march of the French produced a stagnation of trade, and frightened away from their shores the gay and the wealthy, the invalids who courted health, and the young who came for pleasure, it was impossible that the Neapolitans, who had been accustomed for so many years to derive from these migrations the most substantial advantages, should not be powerfully affected by the loss which they had sustained.

In this state of things, by which industry was paralysed, and mendicity increased, the higher ranks remained unmoved at the distresses which prevailed around them, nor once stopped to consult upon the means of averting the destruction

which was advancing with rapid strides upon the nation. The retrenchment of useless expenditure, combined with a vigorous system of legislation, and an attention to the wants of the poor, might have done much at this crisis in conciliating the inhabitants of the Two Sicilies, and stimulating them to the defence of their country. Instead of all this, matters were suffered to become worse every day, and an army of spies was kept up to watch the conduct of families, and the discourse of individuals. Amidst all this public distress and private suffering, the palace of the Caserta exhibited the same festivities and revelries, to call them by no worse a name, as had defiled this royal residence in former times. Many persons were also taken up and cast into the various prisons of the kingdom, under the general charge of being republicans or jacobins: but though it is probable that some of these characters might have been poisoned by the pestilential

doctrine of equality, which then prevailed, their errors can furnish no excuse for the oppressions of the government by whom these deluded beings were incarcerated in gloomy dungeons, for no other offence than their opinions. Such was the mode by which the weak rulers of the state vainly thought to suppress the murmurs of the people, and to prevent a revolution. As virtue was not their habit, they were mistrustful of all around them, and naturally concluded, from the cast of their own minds, that the rest of mankind were as vicious as themselves.

Severity, perhaps, might in some instances have been necessary for the public welfare, but nothing could be more preposterous and unjust, than to drag poor men from the bosom of their families, load them with irons, and imprison them without a hearing, while thousands of thieves were living under the protection of the government, and midnight assassins were let off with a comparatively trifling

punishment. Such, however, was the actual state of Naples at the period of which we are speaking; and yet, though the queen was at the head of affairs, and active in these efforts to keep down the progress of free inquiry, she has found admirers and apologists even in this country. To her courteous manners and uncommon ingenuity alone can this partiality be ascribed; for as it happens but seldom, that sovereign princes will stoop to a familiar intercourse with persons of inferior station, the reception which strangers experienced at the court of Naples, where they were entertained with remarkable hospitality, made them blind to the deformities of the state, the depravity of the great, and the miseries of the people. In the oppressions which were exercised, as well as in the follies that were practised, the wife of the English ambassador had a leading concern, and she frequently urged on the mind of the queen the necessity of vigorous measures

against those who propagated calumnies to the disadvantage of the royal character, and doctrines calculated to awaken in the people a sense of their degradation. That her Sicilian Majesty should be deeply impressed by these representations was natural, considering the deplorable fate of her own sister, the unfortunate Marie Antoinette of France; nor was she to be blamed for pursuing such a course as appeared to be most likely to prevent a similar calamity in her own kingdom. But she should have considered that the only effectual method of securing the loyalty of the people, was by rendering herself deserving of it, and studying to improve their condition and morals. Both the queen and her confidential adviser were alike bitter enemies to the revolutionary principles, and inflexibly bent on the destruction of those who had the effrontery to assert the right of subjects to investigate and blame the conduct of their rulers. Lady Hamilton and

her husband never failed in their private interviews with the King and Queen of Naples to dwell on the advantages which England had experienced in the prompt and vigorous steps that had been adopted to repress sedition, and to check the projects of those who aimed by clubs and missions to subvert the constitution. All this had a very powerful effect upon minds already alarmed for their safety, and conscious that their subjects had but too much reason to complain. But there was a wide difference between the two nations; and the proceedings adopted in England for the preservation of the public tranquillity were the result of legislative inquiry, and strictly within the letter and spirit of the constitution, while in Naples private resentment and personal animosity might easily be gratified under the pretence of guarding against the dangerous designs of the disaffected. Besides, in that country, the objects of suspicion or dislike were separated from

their friends, and without legal advice, which indeed could be of no service in a state where it depended on the will of the government, whether these unfortunate persons should have the advantage of a trial or not.

The subject of these memoirs has been immoderately praised for her fidelity to the Queen of Naples, and for her zeal in opposition to the revolutionizing designs of those who were inimical to monarchy. It would, however, have been a far more honourable testimony, to have recorded her exertions in the cause of humanity, and her interference on the behalf of those sufferers who were experiencing the vengeance of a corrupt and arbitrary government. At all events, it was little to the credit either of her Ladyship or her husband, that the British character should be so injured, as to be charged with countenancing measures that would have disgraced Constantinople or Morocco.

When the French ascendency could

no longer be prevented, nor their demands refused, the state prisoners at Naples, who had been confined on suspicion of having sinister designs against the public peace, were brought to a hearing, and discharged. It is not improbable that the republicans carried themselves at this time with a consummate degree of arrogance, nor is it unlikely but that some of those who on this occasion experienced their fraternal kindness were dangerous characters, and actuated by the worst of motives. Nothing, however, in the conduct of the one or the other could justify the unfeeling language of Lady Hamilton to Admiral Nelson, in a letter dated from Naples, the thirtieth of June, 1798. "The jacobins have all been lately declared innocent, after suffering four years imprisonment; and I know they all deserved to be hanged long ago: and since Garrat has been here, and through his insolent letters to Gallo, these pretty gentlemen, that had planned the death of their majesties, are

to be let out on society again. In short, I am afraid all is lost here; and I am grieved to the heart for our dear charming queen, who deserves a better fate!"

This passage suggests a variety of painful reflections, since it is an abundant evidence of the share which our countrywoman had in the internal concerns of that kingdom, and, what is worse, of the bad manner in which her influence was exercised. An abhorrence of jacobinism, when properly understood, was laudable, and a tenderness for the interests of the queen did credit to one who had experienced so much of her kindness. But it is shocking to see how light this woman could treat an imprisonment of four years, without a trial, in a country like Naples, where the murderer had more chance of meeting with lenity than a man of principle, whose only crime was that of having so much stern virtue as to reprehend boldly the errors of government.

In this letter to the English admiral,

her Ladyship speaks most indignantly of the French encroachments, and her conviction that "the court of Naples would be obliged to declare war, if they meant to save their country."

Sir William Hamilton was also convinced of the great danger which menaced that kingdom about the same time, and of the only hope which remained to its ministers; for in a letter to Earl St. Vincent, then commanding our fleet in the Mediterranean, his Excellency says, "Notwithstanding its apparent peace with the French republic, this monarchy is threatened with immediate destruction. The last message from the French Directory at Paris was exactly the language of a highwayman—"deliver your money, or I will blow your brains out." As it is natural for a person in danger of drowning to catch at every twig, your Lordship will see that the greatest hope this government entertains of being saved from impending danger, is in the protection of

the king's fleet under your Lordship's command."

The court of Naples had no right to look for such a support, after having acted with so much indifference to the great cause in which it had embarked with the other allies, at a time when the encroachments of the French might have been stopped by a cordial co-operation in the confederated powers, and the full exertion of all their means for the restoration of order to distracted Europe. A reinforcement, however, was sent to the British commander, and a separate squadron, under Rear-admiral Nelson, was detached to watch the motions of an armament then preparing for sea at Toulon. That officer lost no time in apprizing Sir William Hamilton of his appointment; and it is but justice to the latter to relate that he manifested great activity in furthering the views of his friend, and the good of the service. The expedition at Toulon naturally excited much alarm at Naples,

and when it appeared off that coast, conjecture was very busy about its destination: but Buonaparte sent to relieve the king, by saying that his fleet had another object than Sicily. Nelson, in his pursuit, touched also at the bay of Naples, merely to gain intelligence, and to request the assistance of some light vessels, of which he was in want. On this business he employed Captain Troubridge: and here we are under the disagreeable necessity of copying a tale from the life of Nelson, which was manufactured under the direction of Lady Hamilton shortly after the death of the hero. According to this account, the mission of Troubridge was very different from that which it professed to be, having, for its real object, to obtain permission for the British fleet to victual and water in any of the Sicilian ports. "With this view," says the author of the narrative, "the captain reached Naples at five in the morning, when Sir William Hamilton immediately

arose, and communicated on the business with the king of the Two Sicilies and General Acton ; who, after much deliberation, agreed that nothing could possibly be done which might endanger their peace with the French republic. Lady Hamilton, in the mean time, aware what would be the decision, and convinced, by all she heard from Captain Troubridge, of the importance to the British fleet, as well as to the real security of the Neapolitan and Sicilian territories, that the ports of these countries should by no means be closed against those who were alone able to protect them from the force or perfidy of General Buonaparte ; without consulting any thing but her own correct judgment, and well-intentioned heart, she contrived to procure from some being of a superior order, sylph, fairy, magician, or other person skilled in the occult sciences, as many in Naples, as well as elsewhere, positively profess themselves to be, a small association of talismanic characters,

fraught with such magical and potential influence in favour of the professor, that the slightest glance of the mystic charm no sooner saluted the eye of the Sicilian or Neapolitan governor, than he was incapable of regarding any other object except what the bearer presented to his dazzled view, or of hearing any other injunction but that which the same person addressed to his astonished ear; while his tongue was, at the same time, impelled to secrecy, by the dread of an assured death. Possessed of this treasure, Sir Horatio had immediately sailed; but, as his possession of this talisman was to remain a profound secret, till those periods should arrive when it must necessarily he produced, the same sort of correspondence continued to be kept up between the parties, as if no such favour had been conferred on the hero by any friendly enchantress whatever."

The language in which this story is told perfectly corresponds with the credit

that is due to it; for in none of the Arabian romances, perhaps, is a wilder fiction to be found. But it is necessary to complete the fable, from the only authority on which it rests. After relating the unsuccessful search of Nelson in his first visit to the coast of Egypt, and his return to Sicily, as well for refreshment as in quest of the enemy, the writer gives this extraordinary relation:

"Such instructions had been sent to the Governor of Syracuse, through the preponderancy of French interest at this period, that he would have found it difficult even to enter, and probably have obtained little or no refreshment of any kind, though much was absolutely necessary, had he not, very fortunately, experienced the beneficial effects of Lady Hamilton's powerful influence, secretly exerted, in the only quarter which was not rendered impenetrable, by the menacing insinuations of the then Gallic resident at Naples. It was the assistance

he now procured, by virtue of the talismanic gift received from Lady Hamilton, and without which he could not, in any reasonable time, have pursued the French fleet, and possibly might never have come up with them, that he so solemnly recognised, a short time before his death, as to make it the subject of a codicil annexed to his will, in which he expressly *bequeaths that lady to the remuneration of his country.*"*

True it is, that this great man did so recommend her Ladyship to the gratitude of the nation, and equally true it is that she continued through life to abuse the government for not complying with his request, by conferring on her a pension adequate to the extraordinary services which she affected to have rendered on this as well as on other occasions. In her own memorial to the minister, she

* Life of Nelson, by James Harrison, Vol. I. p. 244, 252.

observes, "The fleet itself, I can truly say, could not have got into Sicily, but for what I was happily able to do, with the Queen of Naples, and through her secret instructions, so obtained; on which depended the refitting of the fleet in Sicily, and, with that, all which followed so gloriously at the Nile."

According to this account, the claims of Lady Hamilton were of a very strong nature; and many persons have, in consequence, been disposed to censure the successive administrations of the country for a supposed injustice to her Ladyship, and disrespect to the memory of the illustrious friend who took so lively a concern in her interests. But if Nelson himself was deceived by female artifice, of which, unhappily, too many proofs are blended with his brilliant exploits, the dispassionate reader will not be disposed to charge the British government with ingratitude, for having rejected those pretensions, though they came supported

by the powerful weight of his authority. On this account, therefore, a few words will be necessary, that an opprobrium so injurious to the national character may be removed, and that future historians may avoid staining their pages by quotations from fabulous narratives.

When Nelson sailed in quest of the enemy, he received considerable assistance from Sir William Hamilton; who, at that time, was in the closest intimacy, both with the King of Naples, and the Minister Acton. Ample means were at the disposal of our ambassador for the good of the service, and he employed them well on the present occasion; by keeping small vessels on the look out along the coast, and active agents employed in various parts of Sicily. The Neapolitan cabinet, or at least that part of it which had the real conduct of affairs under the queen's influence, had, many months before this period, made an urgent application to the Court of London for assistance, and the

presence of a British fleet. When that fleet, therefore, arrived, and in such force as to relieve, in a great degree, those states from their fears, who were most apprehensive of falling beneath the republican dominion, the government of Naples must have been wholly regardless of its fate, if it had withheld such assistance from its deliverers as could be supplied without any hazard. But so far were their Sicilian Majesties from wanting any inclination to grant what was required in the first instance, that an immediate consultation was held on the subject, and various instructions were sent to different parts of the kingdom, enjoining the respective authorities to afford all the relief in their power to the English fleet. Policy, indeed, was used in this business; and while public orders were sent for the purpose of satisfying the French ministers, private injunctions were dispatched, not only to the municipal officers in the several districts, but likewise to many

noblemen, and others, whose loyalty could be relied on, and who were known to be ardently affected to the English. There was, however, no need to "spur a free courser;" for the Sicilians, both high and low, had such a rooted animosity to the French name, that it would have been impossible to have restrained them from contributing the most prompt and efficient aid to our ships, on their arrival in any one of their ports. Such indeed was the fact: for no sooner did Nelson appear off Syracuse, than his fleet was surrounded with boats and vessels of all descriptions, laden with articles of provision. The stores of private houses were opened to supply his necessities, and every peasant in the mountains was happy to bring down the produce of his garden and his vineyard, for the comfort of the English. But had it been otherwise, and had French influence so far prevailed over common sense and humanity in this instance, every one who knows

the naval power of this country, and considers the character of the officers employed on this service, will be convinced, that neither water nor other articles of life would be wanting, where guns could command respect, and money procure a supply. It is not meant to deny that the British envoy acted with a becoming energy on this occasion; nor are we disposed to say, that his enterprising partner failed to use her influence, both at Naples and in Sicily, for the advancement of her friend's wishes, and the good of the cause in which he was engaged. The part which Sir William Hamilton took was consistent with the duties of his station, and his wife assisted him in the business with her wonted activity and adroitness. But when this is granted, no more remains to be justly claimed; for an accredited minister could not well have done less, without subjecting both himself and his employers to censure. That the fleet of Nelson was

more quickly victualled than it otherwise would have been, through the exertions of our ambassador, and the friendship that subsisted between his lady and the queen, may be true; but that without their interference no supplies could have been obtained in Sicily, nor an admission into its ports permitted, is too gross for belief. The English admiral, with an inferior force, had, not long before, entered Sardinia in distress; and yet he paid no respect to the prohibition that had been issued by that monarch against the admission of our ships into his harbours. It is not, therefore, to be credited, that the same zealous commander would have hesitated for a moment in acting with the same promptitude at Sicily, if a churlish spirit and vacillating policy had presumed to thwart him in his great purpose, by withholding from his squadron that supply of water which he could have obtained on the instant, without asking leave of the governor, or availing himself of any

other influence than that which he commanded.

This gallant officer was indeed persuaded that her Ladyship had rendered him great service in his search after the French fleet, and he had perhaps a commendable wish to procure for her a substantial benefit from the British government; but it is to be lamented, that, for the attainment of this object, any thing like art or exaggeration should have been practised.

Lady Hamilton did not want friends in power to bring forward her case in the strongest manner, which would in all probability have been successful, had she been contented with resting her plea for a pension on the simple ground of her husband's long services, without setting up higher pretensions of her own, and such as could not stand a strict investigation: but when this assumption was made, she lost that interest which otherwise might have been exerted in her

behalf. Ministers could not, even with their utmost inclination to do honour to the private sentiments of Nelson, sanction what was manifestly a perversion of facts, and which, if true to any extent, would have been a reflection on the character of an envoy, whose years and experience rendered him too respectable to suffer such a stain on his memory, as must have been the case if a grant had been bestowed for exertions made by his wife, for a public service which it belonged to him to discharge. They who demand more than is their due, always run in danger of losing what they might have gained by candour and moderation; since it is in the nature of things that we should examine narrowly into the conduct of those who endeavour to take an advantage of our credulity.

There was something in the nature of this claim so important, as connected with the national glory, that an explicit statement, and an accurate detail of cir-

cumstances, became necessary for the purpose of shewing both its truth and its value. Instead of this, the writer, who was hired to set off the subject to the best advantage, found himself so embarrassed, that he could not venture to tell his story in round terms and an unvarnished manner; but he clothed it in a fantastical drapery, suited to the pantomimic trick in which he was conscious of being an agent.

The victory of Aboukir diffused a general joy over the countries which had been trembling at the gigantic progress of the new military republic. Naples felt as if she had been released from the grasp of the destroyer; and Captain Capel, who touched there in his way home with the dispatches, gave this account of his arrival and reception to the admiral: "I am totally unable, Sir, to express the joy that appeared in every countenance, and the bursts of applause and acclamations we received. The queen and

Lady Hamilton fainted: in short, Sir, they all hail you as the saviour of Europe."

The conqueror himself, in a letter to Lady Nelson, thus described the feelings of the Queen of Naples, and the exultation that prevailed in consequence of his achievement: "The kingdom of the Two Sicilies is mad with joy: from the throne to the peasant, all are alike. According to Lady Hamilton's letter, the situation of the queen was truly pitiable: I only hope I shall have not to be witness to a renewal of it. I give you Lady Hamilton's own words: 'How shall I describe the transports of the queen? 'tis not possible: she cried, kissed her husband, her children; walked frantic about the room; cried, kissed, and embraced every person near her; exclaiming,—O brave Nelson! O God bless and protect our brave deliverer! O Nelson, Nelson! what do we not owe you! O victor, saviour of Italy! O that my swoln heart

could now tell him personally what we owe to him!"

It is observable, however, that at this time Nelson had a repugnance to visit Naples for the purpose of refitting his ships; and, in a Letter to Lord St. Vincent, he says of his voyage thither, "I detest it; and nothing but absolute necessity could force me to the measure. Syracuse in future, whilst my operations lie on the eastern side of Sicily, is my port, where every refreshment may be had for a fleet."

Naturally fond as the hero was of pleasure, and vain of honours, he seems, at this period, to have dreaded that seat of dissipation to which he was now approaching, and where the syren, by whom his life was afterwards ruled, was then preparing her soft allurements and powerful enchantments. The reception which the admiral experienced at Naples is thus described in a letter to his lady, for whom he still continued to cherish the fondest

affection, and to whom he delighted to impart the sentiments by which he was actuated, and the occurrences which distinguished his eventful life:

"The poor, wretched Vanguard arrived here on the twenty-second of September. I must endeavour to convey to you something of what passed: but if it were so affecting to those only who were united to me by bonds of friendship, what must it be to my dearest wife, my friend, my every thing which is most dear to me in this world? Sir William and Lady Hamilton came out to sea, attended by numerous boats, with emblems, &c. They, my most respectable friends, had really been laid up and seriously ill; first from anxiety, and then from joy. It was imprudently told Lady Hamilton in a moment, and the effect was like a shot; she fell apparently dead, and is not yet perfectly recovered from severe bruises. Alongside came my honoured friends: the scene in the boat was terribly affect-

ing: up flew her Ladyship; and, exclaiming, 'O God, is it possible!' she fell into my arms, more dead than alive. Tears, however, soon set matters to rights; when alongside came the king. The scene was, in its way, as interesting: he took me by the hand, calling me his deliverer and preserver, with every other expression of kindness. In short, all Naples calls me *Nostro Liberatore*. My greeting from the lower classes was truly affecting. I hope some day to have the pleasure of introducing you to Lady Hamilton: she is one of the very best women in the world: she is an honour to her sex. Her kindness, with Sir William's, to me, is more than I can express. I am in their house; and I may now tell you, it required all the kindness of my friends to set me up. Lady Hamilton intends writing to you. May God Almighty bless you, and give us, in due time, a happy meeting!"

The scene mentioned in this letter as having been so terribly affecting, was no

more than one of those fine pieces of acting which fired the brain of Romney, the painter, and made him desirous of running into Sussex to bring up his friend, the poet, to witness a performance which he wanted words to describe. The truth is, that, as the boat drew near to the Vanguard, Lady Hamilton began to rehearse some of her theatrical airs, and to put on all the appearance of a tragic queen. There was a great swell, at this time, in the bay; and, just as the barge reached the ship, the officer, who saw through her affectation, exclaimed, with an oath, that, if she did not immediately get up the side, the consequences might be dangerous; for that he could not be answerable for the safety of the boat. On this, our heroine laid aside her part, till she reached the gangway, where, instead of fainting on the arm of Nelson, she clasped him in her own, and carried him into the cabin, followed by Sir William Hamilton, and the rest of the company.

Here the author of the historical romance, which we have already been compelled to notice more largely than could have been wished, relates a strange incident, which, as he says, would have afforded abundant matter for observation in the days of superstition; but which, without previously ascertaining the fact, is gravely attempted to be accounted for on natural principles:

"While the company were partaking of some refreshment in the cabin of the Vanguard, a small bird familiarly perched on the admiral's shoulder. On the circumstance being remarked—'It is,' said he, 'a very singular thing: this bird came on board the day before the battle of the Nile: and I have had other instances of a bird's coming into my cabin previously to former engagements.' This," adds the writer, "is the more remarkable, as the same thing is said to have afterwards happened prior to the battle of Copenhagen."*

* Harrison, Vol. I. p. 320.

The narrator of this prodigy dismisses it by supposing, that these were merely birds of passage, which mode of reasoning might be satisfactory enough for a solitary instance; but philosophy itself will be confounded by the frequency of the recurrence on the eve of different battles, and in remote parts of the world. But, after all, the story stands on too slender a basis, to require either moral argument, or the aid of science; and it would have been creditable in the writer of Nelson's life, had he suppressed an anecdote for which he could adduce no legitimate authority. Supposing such a circumstance to have occurred at Naples, it is accounted for more rationally by what is told, in this very memoir, of the practice of the Lazzaroni, who kept small birds in wicker cages, which, on the approach of the hero of the Nile, they opened, and gave the little prisoners their liberty. One of these birds most probably entered the cabin windows of the Vanguard, and attracted the notice of the

admiral; but the rest of the story carries too much the air of invention to merit farther attention.

However commendable it might have been in any individuals to shew their gratitude by some signal acts of liberality and splendour, for the decided turn given to the affairs of Europe, in the defeat of the French fleet on the coast of Egypt, little can be said in praise of the extravagant shews, which, on this occasion, were displayed by our ambassador at Naples. The pageantry of these entertainments, and the profusion of expense that was incurred, to gratify an idle vanity, were wholly unworthy the character of that nation which this waste was intended to honour. But the mummery exhibited by the British envoy in that capital was equally impolitic and frivolous; since, while it was conceived in the spirit of the French, it tended to irritate them and their friends more bitterly against the Court of Naples. Common prudence

would have dictated a more moderate expression of joy, therefore, as well to mark the dignity of the British nation, as to prevent laying any thing in the way that might bring on the king of the Two Sicilies the vengeance of the exasperated republicans. But no considerations of such a kind presented themselves to the gallant admiral and his friends, the one being as much pleased by the incense that was offered him, as the others were silly and extravagant in their manner of celebrating his praise.

The birth-day of Nelson happening a little after his arrival, furnished an occasion for a fête which was given by Lady Hamilton; and such was the attention of the court, that though it was a time of state mourning, the sables were, by order, laid aside in honour of the day. In a letter to Lady Nelson, dated September the twenty-eighth, 1798, the admiral says:

"The preparations of Lady Hamilton for celebrating my birth-day to-morrow,

are enough to fill me with vanity; every ribbon, every button has Nelson, &c. The whole service is marked H. N. glorious first of August. Songs and sonnetti are numerous beyond what I ever could deserve. I send the additional verse to God save the King, as I know you will sing it with pleasure. I cannot move on foot, or in a carriage, for the kindness of the populace: but good Lady Hamilton preserves all the papers as the highest treat for you."

At this festive scene, which consisted of a ball and supper, eighteen hundred persons are said to have been entertained; but the harmony of it was somewhat interrupted by an altercation between the admiral and his son-in-law, which might have been attended with serious consequences, if Captain Troubridge and another officer had not conveyed the young man out of the room. This circumstance has been artfully worked into the history of the hero's life,

which was put together at Merton, under the observation of Lady Hamilton, for the double purpose of blazoning her virtues and of injuring Lady Nelson. The former is said to have exerted her good offices on this occasion, as a gentle mediatrix, in conjunction with her husband, the ambassador; and in consequence of these benevolent attentions, a reconciliation was effected. But had her Ladyship been really as generous as she is here represented, this story would never have appeared in print at all; since there it could not have come but for her black remembrance of it; and the malignity of her disposition is evident in the ambiguity with which the circumstance is related. More simplicity in the narrative, however, would have had a contrary effect to that which was intended, for then the conduct of this young man, instead of meriting the opprobrium which the calumny was designed to create, would be found entitled to some praise for his filial affec-

tion to an absent mother, whatever censure he might have deserved for the unseasonable expression of his feelings. But so far was Lady Hamilton from acting kindly to Captain Nisbet, after his keen remark on her wanton behaviour, and his resentment of the unworthy conduct of a man to whom he had hitherto always looked up with respect, that her Ladyship did every thing she possibly could to render his situation uneasy, both at this period and ever afterwards. When he obtained the command of the Thalia frigate, she was continually contriving some plan or other for his absence; and such was her unbounded influence over Nelson's mind, that he suffered her to interfere with the naval service in such a way as to keep Mr. Nisbet always at sea. At one time, however, the latter arrived rather unexpectedly, and on entering a room filled with company, after paying his respects to the admiral, the young officer, turning sarcastically to her Lady-

ship, who sat by the side of the hero, said, in a manner too pointed to be misunderstood, " Pray, where am I to cruise next, my Lady ?"

The obligations of Nelson to his son-in-law were very great, and till this residence in the seat of Calypso, their friendship had never sustained any interruption. Nay, even shortly after the unpleasant scene which has been just mentioned, the admiral wrote in the following manner to his Lady. " The improvement made in Josiah by Lady Hamilton is wonderful: your obligations and mine are infinite on that score; not but Josiah's heart is as good and as humane as ever was covered with a human breast. God bless him, I love him dearly, with all his roughness." It surely is difficult to reconcile this eulogium with the hard measure which the young man experienced from the same hand by which he was praised and persecuted. Nor would it be easy to account for the many slights and se-

verities which were heaped upon a person so nearly related, at the very time when Nelson was expressing for him the most zealous attachment. That this great commander acted with duplicity, may perhaps to some appear too harsh a conclusion, and yet it can hardly be denied that his language and his conduct were somewhat at variance in this, as it was in some other instances, for which the most plausible account seems to be, that he was at this time so completely under the influence of an artful woman, as to have forgotten that respect which was due to the superior dignity of his character. Of this influence a very striking proof appears in a letter written by him to Earl St. Vincent, while he resided at Caserta, in which he says, "I believe Lady Hamilton has written so fully, and, I will answer, so ably on all subjects, that but little remains for me to say. Your commands respecting the queen were executed with so much propriety, that if I

had never before had cause for admiration it must then have commenced. Her Ladyship's and Sir William's inexpressible goodness to me is not to be told by words, and it ought to stimulate me to the noblest actions; and I feel it will."

The weakness manifested in this letter, shews how much the heart of this great man had been affected by the wiles that were practised upon him, and how strangely he had become attached to the interests of the queen, whose court he had not long before characterised, in a letter to the same friend, as completely infamous. But he was unfortunately now in the lap of pleasure, and so enchanted as to have lost the strength of virtue, though he was not deprived of the consciousness of what was right, nor destitute of a proper contempt for the follies by which he was surrounded. Of this, indeed, we have a testimony under his own hand, written to Lord St. Vincent the very day after the celebrated fête, of

which we have taken notice: "I am very unwell;" said he, "and the miserable conduct of this court is not likely to cool my irritable temper. It is a country of fidlers and poets, whores and scoundrels."

That Nelson should with such feelings continue to be fascinated by those who formed a part of this wretched community, is greatly to be lamented, but this instance serves to prove that human nature is sure to be overcome where a man has not fortitude enough to run away from temptation. The valour which "seeks reputation in the cannon's mouth" is of a different quality from that principle of calm and stedfast virtue which opposes with resolution the blandishments of vice. Our brave commander, who suffered himself, contrary to his better judgment, to be lured into the circle of folly, saw plainly enough that he was in a perilous condition, and he had still so much manly sentiment remaining, as to contemn the manners of the people among whom it

was his lot to sojourn. But it may be wondered, that with this persuasion in his mind, he should have remained so strangely prepossessed in favour of those, who, if they did not exactly correspond with the description which he drew, did at least give their countenance to those characters, by admitting them to their private parties and public entertainments. Nelson could not have known the Neapolitans so exactly as to have painted them in the way he did, but through the information which he obtained from his English friends; and if he had not been as blind to their failings, as he was quick sighted to the deformities of others, he would have despised them for their meanness and hypocrisy, in associating with persons, who, in any other place, must have been expelled from society. At an entertainment which was given by the admiral on board of his ship to a very large party of the Neapolitan nobility, Lady Hamilton, in the midst of the feast,

turning to an officer now high in the service, said, "In all that company before you, there is not a woman that is virtuous, nor a man that does not deserve the gallows." Yet these very persons were the chosen friends of the ambassador and his wife. These made up the assembly who celebrated the admiral's birth-day; and these, in short, constituted that precious set for whom he made the most dreadful sacrifices.

But if such was the court of Naples, their conduct cannot be justified, who for many years gave a particular countenance to the depravity which prevailed there; nor can any apology be found for the attempts which were made to uphold that system of corruption and oppression, by the power of the British navy, and by the influence of our national character.

CHAP. XI.

Never did base and rotten policy,
Colour her working with such deadly wounds.
SHAKESPEARE.

THE naval victory which had been gained off the shores of Egypt, and the consequent disasters to which it exposed the flower of the French army, commanded by the most fortunate of the revolutionary generals, stimulated Austria to embark in a new war, with the hope of crushing the insolent republic. In this design it found a very willing ally on the part of the court of Naples, which engaged to raise eighty thousand men for the common cause. Ferdinand shewed more energy on this occasion than he had ever displayed before, but unluckily his

soldiers wanted courage, and their commander, the noted Mack, seems to have been deficient both in talents and honesty. The king marched with thirty-two thousand men to Rome, but the cowardice of his troops gave the enemy an easy victory, and he was glad to hasten back to his capital, for the purpose of saving himself and his family.

Nothing now remained for this unfortunate court but to remove to Sicily, which was effected by the prompt assistance of Lord Nelson, who then lay with his squadron in the bay. Great address, however, was requisite in the management of this important business; and it is no more than justice to Lady Hamilton to state, that she displayed throughout the perilous concern an uncommon degree of heroism, with no little skill and judgment. Having discovered a subterraneous passage, which led from the royal apartments to the sea-shore, she accompanied Lord Nelson one evening by this way,

and thus arranged secretly the proper steps for conveying on board his ship the most valuable of the property.

While this was going on, an accident occurred, which had very near proved fatal to the whole design, for a bell having been touched, gave an alarm to a sentry at a little distance, who would have gone to the place, had not her Ladyship, with great presence of mind, hastened to the man with an apology for having unintentionally made the noise, and requested him to forbear disturbing the family. By this quickness, she succeeded in preventing any discovery, and the conveyance of the treasures through the passage to the boats continued all that night, and till the royal fugitives were ready for their departure. Of these interesting and truly affecting transactions, which were obliged to be conducted with great privacy to prevent giving any cause for suspicion to the Neapolitans, an account was drawn up by Lord Nelson him-

self, and transmitted to Earl St. Vincent, from which it will be proper here to extract some particulars:

"On the fourteenth of December," says his Lordship, "the Marquis de Niza, with three of the Portuguese squadron, arrived from Leghorn, as did Captain Hope, in the Alcmene, from Egypt. From that time the danger for the personal safety of their Sicilian majesties was daily increasing; and new treasons were found out, even to the minister of war. The whole correspondence relative to this important business was carried on with the greatest address, by Lady Hamilton and the queen, who, having been in constant habits of correspondence, no one could suspect them. Lady Hamilton, from that time to the twenty-first, every night received the jewels of the royal family, &c. &c. and such clothes as might be necessary for the very large party about to embark, to the amount, I am confident, of full two millions five hundred thousand pounds sterling. On the eigh-

teenth, General Mack wrote that he had no prospect of stopping the progress of the French, and entreated their majesties to think of retiring from Naples, with their august family, as expeditiously as possible. From that day, various plans were formed for the removal of the royal family from the palace to the water side. On the nineteenth I received a note from General Acton, saying that the king approved of my plan for their embarkation. During that day, the twentieth and twenty-first of December, very large assemblies of people were in commotion, and several were killed. On the twenty-first, at half-past eight, P. M. three barges, with myself and Captain Hope, landed at a corner of the arsenal. I went into the palace, and brought out the whole royal family, put them in the boats, and at half-past nine they were all safely on board the Vanguard. On the twenty-third, at seven, P. M. the Vanguard, Samnite, and Archimedes, with about twenty sail of vessels, left the

bay of Naples. The next day, it blew much harder than I ever experienced since I have been at sea. Your Lordship will believe my anxiety was not lessened by the great charge that was with me; but not a word of uneasiness escaped the lips of any of the royal family. On the twenty-fifth, at nine, A. M. Prince Albert, their majesties' youngest child, having ate a hearty breakfast, was taken ill, and at seven, P. M. died in the arms of Lady Hamilton. And here it is my duty to tell your Lordship of the obligations which the whole royal family, as well as myself, were under, on this trying occasion, to her Ladyship. They necessarily came on board without a bed, nor could the least preparation be made for their reception. Lady Hamilton provided her own bed, linen, &c. and became their slave; for, except one man, no person belonging to the court assisted the royal family. At three, P. M. being in sight of Palermo, his Sicilian majesty's royal standard was hoisted at the main-top-gallant

mast head of the Vanguard. At two A. M. December twenty-sixth, we anchored, and at five I attended her Majesty and all the princesses on shore; the queen being so much affected by the death of Prince Albert, that she could not bear to go on shore in a public manner. At nine, his Majesty went on shore, and was received with the loudest acclamations, and apparent joy."

These, indeed, were the genuine effusions of loyal attachment on the part of the Sicilians, who, having for many years groaned under a wretched vice-regal government, and had their revenues drained to gratify the rapacity of the Neapolitans, now entertained a confidence that the presence of the king among them, and the establishment of his court at Palermo, would ameliorate their condition, and correct the abuses of which they had but too much reason to complain. The event proved, however, that the minds of the weak and the vicious are not changed by the difference of situation, or improved

commonly by the visitation of calamity. Their Sicilian Majesties, and the set of parasites around them, had no sooner recovered a little from the fears that depressed their spirits on leaving the ancient capital of their dominions, than they began to indulge in those habits to which that very loss might with strict justice have been attributed. Ferdinand found on this island an abundant employment in shooting; and his queen, with Lady Hamilton, and other special favourites, sought relief, from the trouble which the scenes at Naples had produced, in balls and card parties. The inhabitants of Sicily were astonished at the splendour and gaiety which prevailed; but they were mortified to perceive that nothing like a reformation of public abuses took place, and that, on the contrary, all posts of honour and profit, as they became vacant, were, as formerly, conferred on the Neapolitans. This scandalous policy corresponded with the shameful extravagance which marked the conduct of the court,

though, at the same time, every ducat was wanted for the service of the state. To the miseries of the lower orders, this profligate government was wholly insensible, and, as is usual with depraved minds, instead of reflecting on their errors, and endeavouring to seek for some mode by which to regain the good will of mankind, and to obtain internal tranquillity, they had recourse to amusements of the most frivolous kind, thinking perhaps that such a course was an indication of fortitude. But if they so decried themselves, it was impossible that such proceedings could succeed in imposing upon the inhabitants of Sicily, or those English who were unfortunately compelled to witness this round of licentiousness.

While these follies were acting in Sicily, the city of Naples was in a state of such confusion, that any man of patriotic sentiments might have been of essential service. When the army failed in doing their duty, the populace rose against the French, drove in their advanced posts,

and would have succeeded in exterminating the whole, if a man of enterprise had been at their head; for such was their energy and determination, that when the invaders planted artillery in the streets, the Lazzaroni rushed upon the guns, and stabbed the soldiers. Still there was no virtue in this zeal, though by judicious management it might have been rendered beneficial to the cause of general order, in destroying an unprincipled horde of marauders, who came into that country, as they did every where else, for plunder and ambition, under the pretence of liberty and equality.

The loyalty of the Neapolitans was not the result of principle, but passion, and they hated the French because their progress indicated a change of old customs, and the subversion of institutions which the people regarded with superstitious reverence, though they neither enjoyed any benefit from them, nor could assign the smallest reason for their attachment.

There were many intelligent persons,

on the other hand, who hailed the entrance of the French with an enthusiastic delight, thinking that by the instrumentality of these invaders, they should be able to organize their country, and place it on a respectable footing among the nations. Much indulgence certainly is due to the revolutionists of Naples, though their patriotism was far from that purity which in more enlightened parts has guided the conduct of great and good men in the arduous work of reforming states, without having recourse to foreign assistance, or the more dreadful expedient of confusion and anarchy.

Such, however, was the wretched condition of that kingdom, the imbecility of its government, and the poverty of the people, that no political change could well be for the worse; and therefore some excuse may justly be due to those who were glad to avail themselves of any means that offered for bringing in a new system, by which it was possible at least that the country

might stand some chance of improvement. When it is considered that the persons who entertained these sentiments, and who thought it their duty to act upon them, were men of the principal families in Naples; while the adherents to the old order of things consisted for the most part of the parasites of the court, and a lawless rabble; we shall see some cause to respect the motives of the one, and to pity the folly of the others. Nor should it be forgotten, that the revolution in this nation, by which the government was changed from a weak monarchy into a romantic republic, was neither stained by regicide, nor disgraced by persecution: and well would it have been for the cause of humanity, and the honour of the British character, if the restoration of the sovereign, which was effected solely by our navy, had been marked by equal liberality and moderation.

It was no doubt our duty, as the ally of Ferdinand, to contribute all that lay

in our power to re-establish him upon his throne, and to clear his country of the intruders; but, in doing this, great care and caution became necessary, to avoid meddling between him and any description of his subjects. How this obvious course of policy was regarded and observed, now remains to be shewn; for unfortunately the subject is so necessarily interwoven with these memoirs, that, to have passed it over in a cursory manner, would have been inconsistent with every rule of moral and literary justice.

Cardinal Ruffo, the vicar-general of the royalists, and high in the confidence of their Sicilian Majesties, received a royal commission to use his exertions in raising the Calabrese to arms, for the restoration of the monarchy. His Eminence acted in this business with a zeal well suited to the object which he had in view, and the character of the people whose feelings he was employed to rouse. With the cross in one hand, and the sword

in the other, he proclaimed a crusade against the modern infidels; and so powerful were his exhortations, that he quickly gathered to the royal standard a motley assemblage, which he dignified with the title of the Christian army; consisting of peasants, animated by the love of their country; priests, fired with enthusiasm for their religion; and vagabonds, who had no other principle than the desire of plunder. But whatever were the elements of this mixed crew, it cannot be denied that their leader was legally authorized in the measures which he adopted; and, therefore, as the representative of his sovereign, he was assisted by the British ships on the coast, together with the Russians and the Turks, who were then allied against the French republic.

The capture of the city depended on the surrender of the fortress of St. Elmo, which overawes the town, and of the castles of Uovo and Nuovo, which command the anchorage. The first was in

the hands of the French, and the two last were garrisoned by the Neapolitan revolutionists. They were all strong by nature, and well furnished with the means of defence; besides which, it was known that the enemy had a powerful fleet in the Mediterranean, the object of which could hardly be doubted. Under these circumstances, the cardinal felt himself justified in consenting to terms of capitulation with the insurgents in the castles of Uovo and Nuovo, and by which their persons and property were secured. To this treaty the Russian, Turkish, and British commanders were subscribing parties; but, thirty-six hours after the agreement had been signed, and while the flag of truce was flying on the Seahorse frigate, as well as on each of the two castles, Lord Nelson appeared in sight with his whole squadron, and immediately, by a signal, annulled a treaty which had been regularly formed, and as solemnly ratified as any instrument of the

kind ever could be. The British admiral, however, took upon himself to abolish an agreement in which he was not concerned, and over which he certainly had no legal controul, even on the supposition that the terms were disgraceful and injurious to the rights of the Sicilian crown. But, in truth, there was nothing in the treaty itself that could justify this scandalous breach of an express contract; for, in thus shielding the revolutionists from the vengeance of the court, which, like all vicious governments, was as sanguinary in prosperity as it had been abject and cowardly in affliction, the cardinal acted with a moderation which did him honour, and a policy which reflected credit on his understanding. In the cabin of Nelson's own ship, he defended, with energy, the treaty, which he had full authority, by his commission from the king, to ratify; and which our admiral most unquestionably could not abrogate by any other plea than that of power.

A long altercation took place, in which Sir William and Lady Hamilton acted as interpreters, but without making any impression on the mind of the cardinal, who could not reconcile the arguments that were used to the common principles of morality, nor allow that the breach of faith was at all to be vindicated by the bad characters of those to whom a pledge of indemnity had been given. Much abuse has been thrown on this man, both by the admirers of Lord Nelson and by the advocates of democracy; the one endeavouring to screen the hero from that reproach which this transaction has justly cast on his memory, by the supposed treachery of the cardinal; while the others have, with equal truth, aspersed Ruffo as the unprincipled tool of a corrupt and despotic government. But when the whole of the history is examined with that calmness which becomes every inquiry into moral actions, it will appear that the man's views, in the present

instance, were such as indicated an enlarged mind, equally honest, humane, and independent. Had the cardinal been of that trimming disposition which he is described by one party, he would not have opposed the royal will and Nelson's declarations in the manner he did; and if his Eminence was really the worthless being his enemies have painted, he might easily have devised some means to save his interest with the court, by allowing that he had acted without sufficient authority. Instead of this, the cardinal adhered inflexibly to the measure, on the simple ground, that it could not be departed from without infamy; which surely was a very strange degree of obstinacy in a man who is represented as having been of a shuffling disposition, and void of all honourable feeling. It is to be lamented, however, that, let the cardinal have been as bad as possible, he conducted himself, in this instance, with a much more lively sense of just dealing than those who

thought proper to destroy that treaty which he and three other official persons, acting as the representatives of their governments, had entered into for the general good. Should it be said, that too much notice has been here taken of this unpleasant transaction, which has eclipsed the reputation of our great naval hero beyond the possibility of justification, it is sufficient to observe, that Nelson was now under an influence, which, unfortunately for his peace and fame, led him away from that course of duty, a perseverance in which would have preserved him from many other errors. No sooner was the court of Naples in a state by which it was enabled to exercise its vengeance, than a sanguinary determination was formed to sacrifice all who had distinguished themselves in the revolution; and, finding that the chief of these partizans were included in the amnesty granted by the late treaty, as having composed part of the garrisons in the two castles on the bay, it was imme-

diately resolved to repeal what had been done, on the miserable pretext that the measure was contrary to the king's express command. So far the nefarious business affects the character of their Sicilian Majesties, and their confidential advisers only; but in all that follows, the British ambassador and the admiral were equally implicated. Lady Hamilton was indeed at the bottom of the whole; and the malignity of her disposition, and the hardihood of her counsels, appeared conspicuous in every part of this dark affair. In the cabin of the Foudroyant she conducted herself with extreme violence towards the cardinal, whose words were so much perverted by her management and that of her husband, as to produce considerable agitation in the mind of Nelson, who naturally conceived, from the impassioned manner of his Eminence, that he was adding insult to fraud. When Ruffo found that all his reasoning and statements were alike ineffectual, and that, instead of

bringing the admiral to conviction, he was only wasting his own patience and inflaming the passions of his Lordship, he withdrew in disgust at the treatment which he had received, and which certainly was such as did no credit to the urbanity or the justice of those who affected to have no other rule of action than the sense of public duty.

The behaviour of Nelson to Captain Foote, who was a subscribing party to this treaty, was marked by circumstances which were far from reflecting any honour on the judgment or the candour of this celebrated commander. That officer could not have acted otherwise than he did, without incurring a severe responsibility, and laying himself justly open to censure: for it was not his place to interfere in such regulations as the minister of the Sicilian monarch thought best to adopt for his master's interest on the shore of Naples; and, therefore, in signing the treaty with the

other allied commanders on that station, he conducted himself strictly within the line of his professional duty.

Treaties have always been accounted as so very sacred, even among the savage tribes, that, where they may be found disadvantageous and impolitic on the one side, much inconvenience has been yet commonly suffered for a time, rather than violate a specific agreement. Many instances might be produced where chicanery has been practised on the ignorance and credulity of negociators, and others where agents have exceeded their powers; and yet the states whom they represented have rather chosen to suffer a considerable loss and inconvenience than set a bad example, by annulling a formal agreement, on the faith of which so much dependence has been laid. In the present case it should be considered, that the persons who were in possession of these castles had, on their part, put so much confidence in the engagement of

the allies, as to deprive themselves of the chance of escape. Now if these contracting parties to the pledge contained in that agreement were without authority, they must have deported themselves to the persons composing those garrisons in a manner totally unworthy of the commissions which they bore, and the characters which it was their duty to sustain. But Lord Nelson, by his act of abrogation, directly charged these several officers with having exceeded their powers, and promising what they had no right to grant. In doing this, it surely became his Lordship to have made a strict investigation into the business, and to have shewn the authority by which he presumed to dispose of a treaty at his own pleasure. Instead of entering upon the first, he announced his decree by a signal, before he had made himself at all acquainted with the terms of the agreement, the grounds upon which it had been made, or the nature of the sanction with which

it was clothed. How he was authorised to take this high office upon himself, in setting aside an express agreement signed by four persons of competent rank, has never yet appeared in any other way than that of an unproved charge against the cardinal, for having gone beyond the orders of his sovereign. But were this allowed, it would not reach to a justification of the British admiral, who had no right to annul the treaty, merely because he conceived it to be imprudent in itself, and an unwarrantable proceeding on the part of the Sicilian minister. Such a mode of interpreting the expediency and validity of contracts, would throw the whole code by which nations have hitherto consented to be guided into confusion; and nothing could be relied upon, in the shape of a written agreement, where the sword should be suffered to determine the legality of the instrument. That it did actually do this, in the present case, cannot be denied; and the con-

sequences which immediately followed shewed too plainly for what purpose the treaty had been set aside. Among other persons of distinction sheltered in one of these castles was the Prince Francisco Caraccioli, a nobleman, nearly seventy years old, and of an unblemished reputation, who was highly beloved by the Neapolitans, as an excellent officer, having been long at the head of their marine service. This respectable man accompanied the royal family to Sicily; but when the new republic was established, and an edict was issued, decreeing, that those who did not return within a limited time, should forfeit their estates, Caraccioli unfortunately thought it prudent to hasten back to Naples, to preserve his patrimony. There he was soon solicited to take the command of the navy, as he was greatly esteemed by the seamen; and with this request he was induced to comply, most probably from the fear of incurring the resentment of those who

had every thing at their disposal, and who could, of course, in a moment, have deprived him of his property and his life. Caraccioli certainly had many excuses to make for his conduct; and even if he had not, the fact of his having served forty years with credit, independent of his private virtues, ought to have weighed as an atonement for the venial transgression of a few days, during which no outrage had been committed by his orders, and when the king's cause could not have been injured by his being at the head of the marine. But when a wealthy man has rendered himself obnoxious to a vicious and despotic government, he will find that all his merits have no other effect than that of sharpening the axe by which his fate is to be determined. Caraccioli, perceiving that his destruction was determined upon, and seeing that the English commander had violated the only means by which his life could have been saved, endeavoured to effect his escape

in disguise. The distribution of money, however, among the peasantry, and the offer of ample rewards for the apprehension of the proscribed revolutionists, quickly brought this venerable old man within the grasp of those who thirsted for his blood. He was taken in the disguise of a peasant, and hurried on board of Nelson's own ship; which thus became, by a most unnatural act, a jail for the imprisonment of those who were neither subject to our laws, nor could be brought from their own shores to be confined there, without manifest injustice. Whatever might have been the crimes of Caraccioli, he ought not to have been received on board an English ship as a prisoner; and the very act of doing it was an indelible stain upon our national character, which all the professional merit of the person who allowed it could not efface. But what followed this detestable business can never be palliated by casuistry, nor defaced by splendour. It must for

ever stand as one of those spots, which, in the midst of all that is gaudy and dazzling, will obtrude themselves on the memory, to humble the pride of man, and teach him that the greatest of mortals are not those who astonish the world by their heroism, but those who enlighten it by their virtues.

Within an hour from the time that this poor old man was brought on board the Foudroyant, a court-martial of Sicilian officers, the president of which was his determined enemy, assembled in that ship by the orders of Lord Nelson, to try the subject of another state for treason. That Caraccioli was found guilty by this junto, who had no authority for what they did, was a matter of course. The court was as complete a mockery of justice as it was an outrage on humanity. The wretched prisoner was tried, but without having the means of defence; for he had no time to prepare himself, either by legal advice or the production of witnesses. The King of

Naples, who could alone grant a commission for his trial, was at Palermo; but Sir William and Lady Hamilton were on board the Foudroyant: a circumstance that will sufficiently account for the indecent hurry with which the proceedings were hastened, and for the catastrophe which ensued. It was in vain that Caraccioli alleged, in his excuse, that he had been compelled to enter into the republican service, though, if he had proved it by the fullest evidence, it would neither have operated in his favour on the trial, nor stayed the execution, which had been obviously predetermined with as much certainty and justice as the decree of an eastern divan. Caraccioli was found guilty, and received sentence of death; the report of which being communicated to the British admiral, he signed the warrant for its being carried into effect the same evening, by hanging the prisoner at the yard-arm, on board a Sicilian frigate. The unhappy prisoner acted with firmness, though the

disgraceful manner of his death gave him great uneasiness; and he solicited to be shot, saying to Lieutenant Parkinson, who had the charge of him—"I am an old man, Sir. I leave no family to lament me, and therefore cannot be supposed to be very anxious about prolonging my life: but the disgrace of being hanged is dreadful to me." The lieutenant, who felt as a man and an officer on this occasion, went to Nelson with the request of the prisoner; but the only answer he could obtain was to go and mind his duty. Caraccioli then asked the lieutenant if he thought that an application to Lady Hamilton might not be likely to have some effect in changing the sentence. The lieutenant, anxious to oblige an unfortunate gentleman, for whom he entertained a personal respect, went to seek her Ladyship, who could not be found. This woman, however, was in the cabin all the time; and she knew, as well as Nelson, the intent of the application: though she neither had the civility

to hear what the kind-hearted Parkinson had to say, nor humanity enough to interpose in favour of one to whom she and Sir William owed many obligations. But though the ambassador and his wife could not find it in their hearts to speak one favourable word in the behalf of an old acquaintance, they had sufficient strength of mind to view the last horrible scene of the tragedy, which was executed at five o'clock the same evening, at the fore-yard-arm of a Sicilian frigate, commanded by one of Caraccioli's bitterest enemies. As if, however, revenge could not be carried far enough, the common rites of sepulture were forbidden to the body, which was thrown overboard in the bay of Naples, when it might easily have been taken on shore, and interred with decency.

This savage act, which would have disgraced the most barbarous horde in the inhospitable wilds of Africa, was followed by an incident that could not fail

to make a deep impression on superstitious minds. Three weeks after the execution, when the king returned from Palermo, a Neapolitan, who had been fishing in the bay, came one morning to the Foudroyant, and assured the officers that Caraccioli had risen from the bottom of the sea, and was coming as fast as he could to Naples, swimming half out of the water. The story of the fisherman, which at first gained little credit, was soon confirmed, for the same day Lord Nelson, indulging the king by standing out to sea, the ship had not proceeded far, before the officers of the watch beheld a body upright in the water, directing its course towards them. Captain Hardy soon discovered that this was actually the body of Caraccioli, notwithstanding the great weight which had been attached to it; and it became extremely difficult to decide in what manner the extraordinary circumstance should be communicated to the king. This was performed

with much address by Sir William Hamilton; and with his Majesty's permission the body was taken on shore by a Neapolitan boat, and consigned to christian burial. The coxswain of the boat brought back the two double-headed Neapolitan shot, with a portion of the skin still adhering to the rope by which they had been fixed. These were weighed, out of curiosity, by Captain Hardy, who ascertained that the body had risen and floated with the immense load of two hundred and fifty pounds attached to it.*

Another victim to a vengeful despotism was Dominico Cirillo, the king's physician, who had taken a part certainly in the late revolution, but whose age and talents ought to have operated in his favour. This venerable old man, however, was also executed, though it has been said that Lady Hamilton and the queen solicited

* Mr. Clarke's Life of Nelson, from the particular communication of Captain Hardy, Vol. II. p. 189.

his pardon on their knees: but they who can believe that these women acted such a part with sincerity, may with equal reason vindicate them for their virtue. Ferdinand could not have resisted the application, either of the one or the other; and Lord Nelson, in his note of the transaction, has admitted that the old man was sacrificed because he refused to confess his crime: but the British admiral has not gone so far as to say that any measures were taken by him and his friends on the side of mercy. It is evident, indeed, that all their influence went a different way, for his Lordship says, "Eleonora Fonseca had been a great rebel; and Dominico Cirillo, who had been the king's physician, might have been saved, but that he chose to play the fool and lie: denying that he had ever made speeches against the government, and that he only took care of the poor in the hospitals."

Of the part which Lady Hamilton

took in these sanguinary proceedings, no doubt can be formed by any one who knew her character and history, for she made no scruple, during her residence in Italy, to exult in the triumph which by her means had been gained over the enemies of the queen of Naples. But when her Ladyship returned to a country where these transactions could not fail to be investigated and exposed, she felt great alarm, and made use of every engine in her power to make it appear that she had borne no part in the persecution of the unhappy Neapolitans. Some hireling writers and publishers, who were entertained at her house, received from her papers and information for the purpose of elucidating the history of the revolutionary war, and they readily consented to defend the reputation of this female at the expense of truth, though the principles of these very men were at the same time of the most violent republican stamp.

Such was the power of Lord Nelson at this period; and so predominant was the influence of Lady Hamilton over his mind, that the slightest intimation of their wishes in the cause of mercy must have prevailed: and, therefore, when we contemplate so many executions as took place after the restoration of the monarchy, it is impossible to acquit either her Ladyship or her friend of the charge of having countenanced the tragical scenes, which, by their mediation, might have been prevented. It would be a mockery of the feelings of human nature to allege, in justification of this neglect, that such an interference with the course of justice at Naples was inconsistent with the public duties of the British ambassador and the noble admiral. We have seen, indeed, that these eminent men were not so scrupulous in sentencing the subject of another nation to death on board an English ship of war; and surely they who could take upon them to try a foreigner for an

offence committed against his own sovereign, might have been as laudably employed in endeavouring to render the monarch popular, by advising him to exercise the highest prerogative of his crown, instead of remaining silent when the voice of policy, no less than humanity, was calling for mercy. But that divine attribute had no advocate in the councils of Naples; and, therefore, though it should be granted that our countrywoman, who then figured with such splendour at that court, had no direct concern in promoting the work of vengeance, which plunged thousands of families in misery and lamentation, we cannot give her the credit of having in a single instance dried up the tears of the afflicted. No widow experienced her consoling pity—no sorrowful mother had to thank her for exerting the influence which she possessed in behalf of a misguided son, whose only guilt was that of having been carried away by a delusion, which had at least much

in it to deceive the wise as well as the ignorant, and to impose upon the virtuous, while it became an instrument of wrong in the management of the wicked. It is, therefore, surprising, that an able writer, who has bestowed great attention on these events, of which he has given a very luminous account, should have thought proper to call in question the part that was evidently borne by Lady Hamilton in the cruelties of the Sicilian government: but while it is admitted that the wife of our ambassador had great power with the heads of that state, and that she feasted her eyes on a spectacle from which any other woman would have turned with horror, it is said by way of apology for her character:

"Of her being present at the execution of Caraccioli, there cannot be the least doubt, but it is to be hoped, for the honour of her sex, and of her country, that she never directly, or indirectly, encouraged that vindictive spirit which too much pervaded the councils of the

king, and the administration of the Neapolitan state junto, after his Majesty had returned to Palermo.

"Emma Lady Hamilton, one of the most extraordinary women of the age, amidst all her faults, was more noted for her general attention and hospitality, than for any deliberate acts of cruelty towards the Neapolitans, by whom she was in general adored. In the voluptuous court of the Sicilian monarch, her fascinating person commanded a very powerful influence; but in a situation of so much delicacy and danger, she never forgot the character that was expected from the wife of an English ambassador, nor was deficient in any of those courtesies and friendly attentions which mark a liberal and humane disposition. From the arrival of the British squadron at Naples, she had exerted herself to support that good cause, for which Admiral Nelson had been detached: and having in this respect rendered some service, the natural vanity of her mind led her to imagine, and to

endeavour to make the noble admiral and others believe, that from her alone proceeded the means of performing those great events which threw such a splendour on the favourite object of her idolatry. Her leading passion was the love of celebrity; and it was this passion, added to the above delusion, which gradually brought on that fatal and highly wrought attachment which she formed for the hero of Aboukir; for it was the hero, and not the individual, which had captivated her glowing imagination. Its ardour, as it increased, overpowered the natural kindness of her disposition, and eventually involved her in an endless succession of private altercation and public disappointment."*

Reluctant as the liberal mind must feel to withhold its assent from any thing that can be said in favour of those per-

* Mr. Clarke's Life of Lord Nelson, Vol. II. p. 188.

sons who have incurred the general reprehension of the virtuous, the interests of truth require it to be said, that had this woman possessed the gentleness of nature which is here ascribed to her, it would have led her to use the powerful influence which she is allowed to have enjoyed in urging the claims of humanity. But so far was she from appearing at this awful crisis in the amiable character of an angel of peace, that it seemed to be the joy of her heart to promote the work of destruction; and in gratifying this most abominable of all passions, she flattered herself, and succeeded too well in persuading others, that it was the expression of loyalty, and a display of fortitude. Thus the demon of anarchy scatters the firebrands of death, and calls it sport; after which the same restless spirit pours vengeance on the wretched instruments who have suffered themselves to be deluded, and dignifies the immolation with the name of a sacrifice to honour and justice.

CHAP. XII.

Beauty, though injurious, hath strange power.

MILTON.

WHEN the monarchy was restored at Naples, it was natural to have expected that the court would have returned to the ancient capital; or, at least, such measures taken, as might tend to heal the wounds which had been inflicted, and correct the evils under which the people groaned. But nothing of the kind took place on the present occasion; and Ferdinand, instead of softening the horrors produced by civil war, and of acting like a magnanimous prince, who wishes to appear as the father of his family, hastened back, with the British admiral and the ambassador, to Palermo, there to enjoy his sports and

follies; while the persecuted Neapolitans were hunted down by hired blood-hounds, and hurried to the prison and the scaffold, without the least compunction or sentiment of pity. The only security any man had in that state, from the vengeance of the triumphant party, was in his poverty; but, while he thus found protection in his misery against the eagerness of spies and informers, he was, on the other hand, exposed to the certainty of perishing by famine, which, as is usual in such cases, now began to stare, with a ghastly aspect, on the wretched inhabitants of this beautiful city.

There is a peculiar kind of cruelty in vicious and effeminate minds, by which, though they do not imbrue their own hands in blood, they avoid interposing any good offices to repress the vindictive spirit of others; and this want of virtuous feeling for the sufferings of their fellow-creatures leads them to shun the places where they might be called upon to exercise

the duty of humanity. These persons content themselves with that negative virtue which consists in being silent when great oppressions are committed, and in withdrawing from scenes of horror, which, though their influence could not have altogether prevented, their presence and exhortations might have served to render less painful and disgusting. They who abandoned the Neapolitans to the fury of assassins, the rapacity of informers, and the merciless resentment of an unprincipled government, probably thought that they were acting with a strict regard to justice, and according to the dictates of sound policy. This frigid indifference to the calamities of mankind would have been, under any circumstances, disgraceful to those who knew the value of a free constitution, and had the experience, in their native country, of equal laws; but, in the present instance, it was accompanied by a wanton levity, which plainly proved that the distresses of Naples, and

the violence of its oppressors, gave little uneasiness to our ambassador and his most intimate friends. Lord Nelson, on his return to Sicily, accepted a ducal title, with an estate, from Ferdinand: yet it has been said that the admiral did not consent to the proposal, till it had been urged by Lady Hamilton on her knees. Whether this story rests on a legitimate foundation, can hardly be determined; since the only authority which it ever had, was the testimony of the person who is said to have exerted herself in so uncommon a manner to aid the grateful intentions of his Sicilian Majesty. Had Nelson been less vain and solicitous of titles than he was the reverse, such a tale might have passed without any observation on its improbability; but it certainly becomes doubtful, when it is known that he ever attached an extraordinary value to this distinction, which, when coupled with the character of the personage who conferred it, and the class of nobility

with which it associated our countryman, was far enough from being an object of congratulation. It would indeed have been creditable to Nelson had he declined this honour; and, resting satisfied with the unpolluted favours of his own sovereign, preserved the independence of his character. By enrolling his name among the nobles of Sicily, and accepting an estate in that island for having replaced Ferdinand on the throne, this great man tacitly sanctioned the acts of that monarch, and his vindictive cruelty towards his unhappy subjects. Painful as it must be to make these reflections, they are powerfully suggested by the transaction which we have been obliged to record; and the glory of Nelson would unquestionably have shone with greater lustre, if he had resisted with firmness the prostituted titles of an infamous court, especially at a time when the hand that held out the gift was stained with blood.

On the arrival of the Foudroyant at Palermo, the queen came on board, where she embraced Lady Hamilton, and the same moment hung round her neck a chain of gold, to which was suspended a portrait of her Majesty, superbly set with diamonds, and having this motto on the back, "*Eterna Gratitudini!*"

Five days afterwards, while her Ladyship was at the palace with the queen, two coach loads of costly dresses were secretly sent to the house of the ambassador; with a picture of the king richly set in jewels, worth a thousand guineas, for her Ladyship; and another of her Majesty, of the same value, for Sir W. Hamilton. The whole of the presents made by their Sicilian Majesties on this occasion amounted in value to six thousand guineas.

On the third of September, an idle piece of mummery was exhibited in the royal gardens at Palermo, to celebrate the recovery of Naples by the exertions of Lord Nelson.

To transcribe the ridiculous account of this childish puppet-shew, as given by Lady Hamilton in the life of Nelson published under her authority, would be insulting to the judgment of the reader, since it is impossible that any Englishman could be pleased with the description of the Temple of Fame, erected on that occasion, and of the three wax figures, representing Nelson, the ambassador, and his wife; the latter being, very appropriately, no doubt, in the character of Victory, having on her robe the names of all the heroes who were distinguished at the battle of the Nile. At this silly fête, the queen is said to have expressed herself thus to the Turkish admiral, who was present: "On this day last year we received from Lady Hamilton intelligence of this great man's victory, which not only saved your country and our's, but all Europe!"

Such was the farce with which their Sicilian Majesties thought to obliterate

the impression made by the tragedy of Caraccioli, and of the numerous other victims of their revenge at Naples.

In returning to Palermo, the noble admiral committed an error which tarnished his professional reputation as much as it affected his private character. His presence was certainly not necessary at that place, but it was unquestionably very much wanted in other parts of the Mediterranean. Commodore Troubridge, who had the greatest personal regard for Nelson, was very much chagrined at being left to conduct the operations on that coast; while his friend was indulging himself in a round of frivolous amusements, and yielding to the soft dalliance of female allurements. It was impossible that such proceedings could pass without observation; and they did, in fact, occasion much animadversion both at home and abroad. The Sicilians looked upon the admiral with contempt, and bestowed upon him an opprobrious

epithet, characteristic of the influence which Lady Hamilton had gained over the hero: and, so undisguised was this attachment, that many persons of high rank and integrity took the freedom of remonstrating with his Lordship upon the impropriety of his conduct. One naval friend in England expressed his sentiments in this remarkable language: "They say here, my good Lord, that you are Rinaldo, in the arms of Armida; and that it requires the firmness of an Ubaldo and his brother knight to draw you from the enchantress." This allusion was pointed enough, but the reprehension administered by his friend Troubridge was much more severe: "Pardon me, my Lord," said that honest but rough seaman: "it is my sincere esteem for you that makes me mention it. I know you can have no pleasure sitting up all night at cards: why then sacrifice your health, comfort, purse, ease, every thing, to the customs of a country where your

stay cannot be long? Your Lordship is a stranger to half that happens, or the talk it occasions: if you knew what your friends feel for you, I am sure you would cut all the nocturnal parties. The gambling of the people of Palermo is publicly talked of every where. I beseech your Lordship leave off. I really feel for the country."

At another time the same valuable officer wrote to the admiral from Naples; and his letter is too descriptive of the two capitals to be omitted in this place.

"I dread, my Lord," said Troubridge, "all the feasting at Palermo. I am sure your health will be hurt. If so, all their saints will be damned by the navy. The king would be better employed digesting a good government. Every thing gives way to their pleasures. The money spent at Palermo gives discontent here: fifty thousand people are unemployed; trade discouraged; manufactures at a stand. It is the interest of many here to keep the king away;—they all dread reform;—

their villainies are so deeply rooted, that if some method is not taken to dig them out, this government cannot hold together."

The deplorable condition of Naples at this time, owing to the brutal ferocity of the dominant party, is thus strongly portrayed by the same keen and intelligent observer: "There are upwards of forty thousand families who have relations confined. If some act of oblivion is not passed, there will be no end of persecution: for the people of this country have no idea of any thing but revenge; and, to gain a point, would swear ten thousand false oaths. Constant efforts are made to get a man taken up, in order to rob him."

It is to be lamented, however, that these friendly remonstrances had little or no effect on the mind of the person to whom they were addressed; and the festivities of Palermo seem, in truth, to have completely overpowered his moral faculties. Of this an extraordinary instance occurred, with respect to two rich Spanish

ships, laden with quicksilver, lying in the harbour of Palermo, when these gaieties were going on there. The value of these ships was duly appreciated; and, at a dinner given by the British envoy, a consultation was held about the best means of getting possession of them. After various measures were proposed, it was agreed to ask Ferdinand's permission for the boats of the fleet to cut the Spaniards out of the harbour. This arrogant request was accordingly made by Lady Hamilton, in an entire confidence that his Majesty could not refuse so equitable a demand to those who had recovered for him the throne of Naples. But, weak as the king was, he had not altogether lost his spirit nor his understanding; so that, turning indignantly from the dishonourable proposal, he asked "whether they took him for the Dey of Algiers, by asking him to allow an act towards a friendly power which the most barbarous of the African states would reject with abhorrence."

The persons who could thus solicit

Ferdinand to violate, in their favour, the rights of hospitality and the laws of nations, manifested their tenderness, about the same period, towards the suffering people of Malta, who were actually reduced to the most miserable condition for the want of food, when the island of Sicily could have furnished them with abundance. Commodore Troubridge, in a letter to Nelson, dated new-year's day, 1800, gives an affecting picture of the state of Malta, with no very honourable mention of the gentle feelings of the British ambassador: "My Lord," says Troubridge, "we are dying off fast for want. I learn, by letters from Messina, that Sir William Hamilton says, Prince Luzzi refused corn some time ago; and Sir William does not think it worth while making another application. If that be the case, I wish he commanded at this distressing scene instead of me. Puglia had an immense harvest. Near thirty sail left Messina before I did, to load corn:

will they let us have any? If not, a short time will decide the business. The German interest prevails. I wish I was at your Lordship's elbow for an hour: all, all will be thrown on you, rely on it. I will parry the blow as much as is in my power. I foresee much mischief brewing. God bless your Lordship—I am miserable. I cannot assist your operations more. Many happy returns of this day to you: I never spent so miserable an one. I am not very tender-hearted; but really the distress here would move even a Neapolitan." While thousands were starving for want at Malta and Naples, there was nothing but riotous waste at Palermo, with continual shows and successive entertainments on board the English ships in the harbour. Sometimes the fleet made short trips to sea; not to look after the enemy, but to gratify the king and Lady Hamilton; particularly the last, who appeared in the admiral's barge very much like Cleopatra; and, in point of

extravagance, she certainly did not fall short of that voluptuous and accomplished woman. One of these disgraceful scenes is thus described by an eye-witness. The ships were all decorated with flags, firing salutes, and manning the yards, as the royal party sailed along, followed by above one thousand boats, in many of which were bands of music playing, Nelson and Lady Hamilton leading the van, in a twelve-oared barge. The king, in one of eight oars, was not paid much attention to; but he amused himself in the princely sport of shooting sea-gulls. The whole party visited the Minotaur, commanded by Sir Thomas Louis, where they partook of a cold collation, and returned in procession to the Foudroyant; on reaching which ship, royal salutes again were fired. The dinner on board that ship was served on tables reaching the whole length of two decks; the cannon being even removed to make way for fruit and chocolate tables on each side.

Nelson, on this occasion, seemed to feel little compunction; and he could hardly help it, when he beheld such an exhibition in his ship. He left the dinner party very early; and, taking a turn or two upon the quarter-deck with one of his officers, appeared, for a little while, extremely agitated; and, at last, as he looked at the strange scene before him, he muttered, "Curse such doings! I wish there was an end of them. My ship looks for all the world like a pastry-cook's shop!" When Lady Hamilton perceived his thoughtful manner, she arose immediately from the table, and, hastening to the hero, conducted him instantly back to the company; where, by her arts, he soon appeared to have lost his uneasiness. When the evening came on, the ships were illuminated, and salutes were fired at the drinking of every toast, which were repeated from the forts on shore.

Another remarkable instance of the folly into which great men can fall, when

they suffer themselves to be led away from the path of duty by the allurements of pleasure, happened shortly after the expensive entertainment which has just been described. One of Nelson's favourite amusements was to go about the streets in disguise, accompanied by Lady Hamilton, who could adopt any character, and perform it to great advantage. Having taken a cheerful glass on a fine evening, he proposed to his dulcinea to take a ramble about the city, which was acceded to, and they accordingly sallied forth, laughing at all they met, but without being known until they entered a house of entertainment, where a party of English officers were enjoying themselves with their ladies. Here our hero and his friend indulged in the humours of the place, thinking that they were undiscovered; but it chanced that the boatswain of the Foudroyant looked into the room with a midshipman, and recognized the admiral. The boatswain,

being a man of pleasant manners and genteel address, contrived to watch his Lordship and his companion from place to place, till they reached the ambassador's house, after which, the two shipmates, out of a frolic, went to court, which was very easy of access to British officers. There the boatswain attracted the notice of the king, who entered into conversation with him, which ended by conferring on the man one of the honours of knighthood. This afterwards became known to Lady Hamilton, who followed the unfortunate chevalier with inexorable vengeance, and the admiral, at her instigation, turned the boatswain, notwithstanding his new dignity, before the mast; but the midshipman escaped with a reprimand for having been a party in a frolic, which, to say the most of it, was far from deserving censure, and least of all from those who had been guilty of exhibiting in their own conduct an unpardonable degree of levity and indiscretion.

A volume would not suffice to narrate the disgusting circumstances which occurred at Palermo; but though the dissipation that was daily witnessed there gave just offence to every man who felt for the honour of his country, and the sufferings of those who were injured by these proceedings, there was still more to be deprecated in them than the mere waste of time and money with which they were attended. The service itself was materially affected by the influence of Lady Hamilton, who had so much command over her admirer, as to interest herself in the promotion of some persons who did little honour to the recommendation.

It is also a fact, that vessels were purchased for the use of the fleet, which proved of no other utility than that of increasing this woman's patronage. Such proceedings could not escape public observation, and to have permitted the continuance of them would have been a criminal negligence on the part of the ad-

ministration. The obvious mode of remedying the evil without animadverting on the conduct of the gallant admiral, was that of recalling the ambassador, a measure which it would have been well for all parties, if it had been adopted some years before. Accordingly, Mr. Arthur Paget was appointed to supersede Sir William Hamilton, very much to the disquietude of his lady, and the mortification of Lord Nelson, who saw in the act a marked disapprobation of the line of conduct which he and his friends had pursued on this station. But instead of considering the matter in the only proper light, as a measure which was of imperious necessity at an eventful period, when every sacrifice for the public good became indispensible on the part of individuals, no less than of government, his Lordship immediately came to the resolution of giving up his employment, and of returning to England with his friends ; and such was their patriotism and regard to pro-

priety, that they gladly encouraged him in this design.

Lady Hamilton, however, had some consolation in the midst of this disgrace, by receiving from that strange monarch, the Emperor Paul, the cross of the order of Malta, being the first Englishwoman on whom that distinction was ever bestowed, and the last perhaps that ever would have desired it. Leave was solicited of our court to confirm the honour by a special grant to wear it; but though much was done for this purpose, the application was treated with dignified silence.

The Queen of Naples was nearly as much displeased at the change which this removal occasioned as Lady Hamilton; for though there was no real friendship between these two uncommon women, they affected the warmest concern for each other's welfare, because the attachment served to gratify their unbounded love of pleasure.

One fact delineates the character of Sir

William Hamilton so completely, and shews the extreme propriety of the course which his Majesty's ministers adopted on this occasion, as to speak for itself, to the mind of every unprejudiced person. When Mr. Paget arrived in Sicily, the late ambassador, instead of paying him proper attention, and entering upon such explanations as were requisite for the particular guidance of the new resident, and the benefit of the nation, hastened off with his wife on board the Foudroyant, for Malta. Soon after their return to Palermo, the whole party, accompanied by the queen, with three of the princesses, and Prince Leopold, embarked for Leghorn, where they landed on the sixteenth of June, 1800. Here her Sicilian Majesty presented to the admiral a picture of the king set in diamonds and emeralds; while to Sir William Hamilton she gave a snuff-box of gold, with the pictures of the king and queen on the lid, set round with diamonds; and his lady received, at the

same time, a superb diamond necklace, with the cyphers of the names of all the royal children.

After remaining about a month at Leghorn, an alarm was spread that the French were advancing, on which the populace rose, armed themselves from the arsenal, and demanded that Lord Nelson should lead them against the enemy. Here, as we are told, the eloquence of Lady Hamilton succeeded in allaying this turbulent assembly, and prevailing upon the whole of the infuriated mob to return their arms very quietly to the place from whence they had been taken. Notwithstanding this extraordinary gallantry in the people of Leghorn, their royal and noble visitors thought it most prudent to set off from thence early the next morning for Florence, where they remained two days, and received the most respectful attentions. After continuing at Ancona about a fortnight, they embarked in two Russian frigates for Trieste, from

whence the queen immediately proceeded for Vienna, followed two days afterwards by Lord Nelson, and Sir William and Lady Hamilton. In this capital they remained six weeks, partly on account of the weakness to which the travelling had reduced Sir William, and partly out of compliance with the urgent intreaties of the Queen of Naples, who, as the mother of the Empress, wished to do all the honours that lay in her power to the companions of her journey.

Among others who were eager to entertain the English visitors, the Prince and Princess of Esterhazy distinguished themselves greatly by their hospitality, as well out of respect to Nelson, as in return for the civilities which they had experienced at Naples from our ambassador. The strangers were received with uncommon marks of distinction at the palace of Eisenstadt, belonging to the prince; and during a stay there of four

days, a hundred grenadiers, each full six feet in height, constantly waited at table, where every delicacy was served up in profusion. A grand concert was also given in the chapel, under the direction of the venerable Haydn, whose oratorio of the Creation was performed in honour of the guests.

It is said that the Queen of Naples was very solicitous that Lady Hamilton should return with her to Italy; and that when she could not prevail, her Majesty made an offer of settling upon her Ladyship an income of one thousand pounds a-year, which was refused by Sir William and his wife, on the ground that the acceptance would subject them to unmerited suspicions at home. This story is much of a piece with some others which we have been obliged cursorily to notice; and though the relation of it was designed to display the disinterested character and delicate sentiments of the parties, who are described as acting in a man-

ner so very unlike themselves; yet when it is known that this very Lady Hamilton afterwards made applications to the Queen for pecuniary aid, without receiving even an answer to the request, some doubts may reasonably be entertained of the truth of the narrative. From Vienna the travellers proceeded by invitation to see the Archduke Charles, who was then at Prague, and after a splendid reception there, they departed for Dresden, where they took water, and thus pursued the remainder of their journey to Hamburgh; at which city the hero of the Nile was welcomed with universal acclamations; and some very singular anecdotes have been related of the enthusiastic veneration in which he was held by the people of Germany. One of these is too remarkable to be omitted in this place, though there are some particulars in it which have the appearance of being apocryphal. A wine-merchant of Hamburgh, who was above seventy years of

age, one day requested to speak with Lady Hamilton, who readily gave him a private audience, when he informed her that he had some excellent old Rhenish wine, of the vintage of 1625, of course one hundred and seventy-five years old, and which, as he said, had been in his possession above half a century. This, he observed, had been preserved for some very extraordinary occasion; and one had now arrived far beyond any that he could have expected. The old gentleman, therefore, who had been so careful of his wine for an indefinite time and purpose, requested her Ladyship to interpose her good offices to prevail on Lord Nelson to accept of six dozen bottles, that, as he said, "part of this extraordinary liquor might have the honour of flowing with the heart's blood of the immortal hero, a reflection which could not fail to render the donor the most fortunate man in existence during the remainder of his days." His Lordship being in-

formed of this singular application, came into the room, and took the old gentleman very kindly by the hand, while he at the same time declined the present. He was, however, prevailed upon at last to accept of six bottles, on condition that the wine-merchant should dine with him the next day. This was cheerfully acceded to, and a dozen bottles were sent; on which the admiral remarked, that as he yet hoped to have six more victories, he would keep that number of his friend's wine on purpose that he might drink a bottle after each. This his Lordship did not fail to remember on coming home after the battle of Copenhagen; when he devoutedly drank the health of the donor.

On the arrival of the party at Hamburgh, Lord Nelson wrote home for a frigate to accommodate himself and his friends; but this not being granted as promptly as it had been expected, a packet was hired at Cuxhaven, which,

after a rough passage of five days, entered Yarmouth on the sixth of November. Three days afterwards, his Lordship, accompanied by Sir William and Lady Hamilton, reached London, but instead of separating, as they ought to have done for a little while, out of respect to private feeling and public decorum, all three proceeded to take up their residence at the same hotel, where Lady Nelson and the venerable father of the admiral already occupied apartments. It is impossible to account for so flagrant an impropriety of conduct on any other ground than an absolute intention to give offence to the sensibility of a wife, knowing, as Lady Hamilton did, that the notoriety of her connexion with Lord Nelson had been long and loudly talked of, not only in Italy but in England. She had, indeed, received many communications on the subject from some of her correspondents, and particularly from her old protector, Mr. Greville, who apprised

her of the various rumours which were in circulation to her disadvantage. Any woman, therefore, who had the smallest regard for her own character, or respect for the feelings of a wife and a father, would have avoided the slightest occasion of giving them uneasiness, at the first interview between them and their gallant relative. But, as if Lady Hamilton had lost all idea of propriety in the climate where she so long danced the circle of pleasure, the sober customs of England were treated by her with utter contempt; and she evinced also such a total insensibility to the mental wounds which her presence inflicted, as shewed but too clearly a determinate plan to effect that fatal breach, which shortly afterwards she was enabled to accomplish. When, therefore, all the circumstances are considered, the lines of the satirist will by no means be an exaggerated description of her character:

Obscure by birth, renown'd by crimes,
Still changing names, religions, climes,
At length she turns a bride:
In diamonds, pearls, and rich brocades,
She shines the first of batter'd jades,
And flutters in her pride.
So have I known those insects fair,
Which curious Germans hold so rare,
Still vary shapes and dies;
Still gain new titles with new forms,
First filthy gnats, next wriggling worms,
Then painted butterflies.

POPE.

CHAP. XIII.

Bright characters lose much of their splendour at a nearer view; and many, who fill the world with their fame, excite very little reverence amongst those that surround them in their domestic privacies.

JOHNSON.

SHOULD the author of these memoirs be suspected of taking a delight in that high colouring which gives to human infirmities the deformity of vice, a total misconception will be formed of his sentiments, as well as of the object which he has in view. The most inflexible in the cause of virtue, however severe they may be towards habitual immorality, never derive pleasure from the chastisement which the sense of duty compels them to inflict; nor does the exposure of guilt afford them

any cause for triumph. But it is necessary, to the great end of moral justice and historic verity, that characters which have a connexion with public men and national events should be fairly represented; and that more especially, when by preserving silence, or attempting an apology for errors, the worthy and unassuming may be in danger of being as much injured in the estimation of posterity, as they were by those who ought to have protected them from insult.

Soon after the return of Lord Nelson to England, great uneasiness was felt by those who had his honour and the peace of his family really at heart, in consequence of his attachment to Lady Hamilton, and her treatment of his meek and accomplished partner. An instance of this occurred within a fortnight; and it was of so disgusting a nature, that if the relation were not calculated to throw light on the characters, the scene should be buried in oblivion. A house having been

taken for his Lordship in Dover Street, he had, of course, many visitors of distinction, among whom, one day, was a lady of very high rank, who paid him and Lady Nelson much polite attention, but without deigning to notice Lady Hamilton, though the admiral endeavoured to bring the latter forward as his particular friend. This circumstance was not likely to pass unobserved, and when the lady retired, much contemptuous language was used on the subject of her behaviour, in which abuse Lady Nelson did not concur, but preserved an absolute silence; and for that she drew upon herself some very opprobious epithets from her husband. That day the company at dinner happened to be numerous, and during the entertainment, Lady Hamilton conducted herself with a marked malignity towards Lady Nelson, in which the admiral was weak enough to participate. At length the cunning woman, whether from real illness, or repletion, or vexation, with-

drew to her room; and when Nelson perceived that she remained absent longer than common, he harshly demanded of his wife where Lady Hamilton was, and who was with her. Lady Nelson mildly replied: "that her own woman had been sent to attend her Ladyship;" on which his Lordship flew into a violent passion, and insisted that she should instantly go and wait upon Lady Hamilton herself. Notwithstanding this rudeness, and want of feeling, Lady Nelson immediately arose from table, and went as she was directed; but soon afterwards the impatient hero hastened also to the apartment, where he found Lady Hamilton very sick, and his patient wife holding the basin for her accommodation. Instead of being affected, as he ought to have been, by this act of condescension, his Lordship became more furious, and directly charged his gentle partner with being the cause of the distressing state in which he found his favourite. When asked the reason for this

accusation, he inveighed bitterly against his wife, as having injured the virtuous sufferer, by calumniating aspersions and jealous insinuations; on which, Lady Nelson instantly applied to Lady Hamilton, and asked "whether there was any thing in the treatment which she had received since her arrival in England that could justify what she then heard?" This appeal was so powerful, as to have for the moment the effect of eliciting a frank confession, that there was no ground for what had been so harshly alleged: on which, the astonished Nelson, turning to the speaker, exclaimed: "that her soul was as black as hell; for that she had been continually poisoning his mind with stories of Lady Nelson's jealousy and illiberality." Roused at this keen reproach, the sick lady started up, and swinging poor Lady Nelson by the arm round the room, she tauntingly said: "there, madam, only serve him as I have done you, and he will know better how to behave himself." It

might have been expected, that after this discovery of the treachery of the woman who had allured him by her wiles, Lord Nelson would have broken the fatal chain in which he was held. This, however, he wanted resolution to perform; and, on the contrary, he became more enchanted than ever; which is accounted for by the fact that the fair companion of his cruises and his travels was now in a state which indicated the appearance of an evidence that their friendship had been somewhat more than platonic. The prospect of this living witness excited no other uneasiness in the parties than that which arose from the sense of their being unable to give a legitimate name to the fruits of their amorous intercourse. Though they were both married, yet the lady had reason enough to think from the age of her husband that the day of her emancipation could not be far distant: but the case was otherwise on the opposite side, where little chance appeared of a dissolution by

the death of the wife, and none at all of a separation being effected by her indiscretion. To this may be ascribed the rancorous hatred which Lady Hamilton conceived against the woman whom she had so cruelly injured, by alienating from her the affections, and even the civilities of her husband. In Italy the impediment to her ambition might have been removed without much difficulty or danger; but in England, the only thing that could be done, was to widen the breach, and to triumph in the wrong. Sir William Hamilton being far advanced in years, was easily imposed upon by fictitious ailments, which were devised as the occasion of frequent sickness, and other symptoms, that required seclusion. He and his lady were now settled in a house belonging to Mr. Greville, at the end of Piccadilly, overlooking the Green Park: and here Lord Nelson was much oftener to be found than at his own home. The great object, in fact, which he had now in view, was to se-

parate himself from his wife, and to become a fixed resident in the same house with the woman who had contrived to seduce him from the paths of peace. This last business required some little management, and the way in which it was effected did no more credit to the ingenuity of the contrivers, than the motives by which they were actuated did honour to their morality. It was represented to Sir William Hamilton, that his noble friend was actually driven from his domestic comforts by a series of persecutions and reproaches, which had completely destroyed his tranquillity. These complaints were heightened from day to day, sometimes by his Lordship, and at others by the artful Emma, who had cunning enough to excite the resentment of her husband against Lady Nelson, by the reports of insults that were never offered, and of calumnies which were never uttered. At length his Lordship surprised his old friend one day with the declaration that he had no longer a house to put his head

in, as he chose to express himself; and poor Sir William, very good-naturedly, turning to Emma, exclaimed: "Do you hear what Lord Nelson says? Our house is large enough: shall we give him the use of it?" This was no more than what her Ladyship expected, and therefore, without any hesitation, she at once signified her assent. The naval hero, however, observed, that as such a proceeding would in all probability make the world talk, it must be avoided. "A fig for the world," replied the knight. "I have lived too long to mind what the world either thinks or says on such matters; so you have no more to do than to plant yourself here without further scruple or delay." Such was the friendship of Sir William, and in this magnanimous contempt of public opinion he was supported by his spirited lady, who certainly through life never manifested much respect for those sentiments which have usually been considered as the rule of good manners.

Nothing could be more ridiculous than

to describe the admission of Lord Nelson into the family of Sir William Hamilton as an act of charity, and yet so it has been represented by some impudent panegyrists of the insidious betrayer of an aged husband's honour, and the artful destroyer of a virtuous woman's happiness. If Lord Nelson had really any cause for dissatisfaction in his own habitation, he was far from being under the necessity of seeking an asylum; but least of all should he have accepted the invitation of the very man, with whose wife he was more than suspected of carrying on a scandalous intercourse. The parties were well acquainted with what people said, both in England and every where else; this outrage, therefore, upon public decency, and utter disregard of private feeling, afforded too plain a testimony of their want of sensibility, who were so far from being careful to avoid giving offence, that they were not even guided by common prudence in preserving

appearances. The venerable father of Lord Nelson, then on the verge of eighty, still continued his kind attentions to his daughter-in-law, with whose virtues he had been so long acquainted, and in whose sorrows he could not fail to participate. Uncommon exertions indeed were made by his Lordship, and those who courted his favours, by flattering his follies, to remove the ill impressions which this connexion had produced on the mind of the good old man. But though he bore his faculties meekly, and at length ceased to complain, because he saw that it would be useless, nothing can be farther from the truth than the assertion that he was rendered easy by the arts which were used to lull his suspicions. Other branches of the family, indeed, took little pains to satisfy themselves on the subject, and the consciences of some were made of such flexible stuff, that the strange fact of Lord Nelson's living under the roof of a man, whose honour was not much re-

spected by the circumstance, was so far from giving them any concern, that they quickly transferred to the lady of the mansion those attentions which they had been accustomed to pay to their own amiable and once beloved, but now insulted and deserted, relative.

It has been falsely said that this excellent woman was totally indifferent to her husband's glory, and yet that the rank to which she had been elevated produced such an effect upon her mind and behaviour as to prove extremely mortifying to the rest of the family; which accusations could not well be true; for if she was so proud of her title, as she is stated to have been, she could not avoid feeling some satisfaction at the means by which it had been acquired. But, in reality, no woman ever deported herself with more courtesy and humility, in all the changes which she passed through, from the time that she refused the most advantageous offers for the sake of Nelson,

and placed her property at his absolute disposal, to the period when by a cool, and therefore still more cruel act, he succeeded in prevailing upon her to sign a deed of separation. Let it, however, be remembered, when all the malignant aspersions of sycophants and liars are consigned, with the authors, to the region of infamy, that the man who, in the height of his splendour, cast off the partner of his humbler days, and the sharer of his obscurity, for an ambitious, extravagant, and wheedling wanton, bore this candid testimony to the dignity of virtue, on the day of separation, which was the thirteenth of January 1801; "I call God to witness there is nothing in you, or your conduct, I wish otherwise."* After this last affecting interview, which would furnish many interesting and instructive reflections, his Lordship, accompanied

* Mr. Clarke's Life of Lord Nelson, Vol. II. p. 256.

by his reverend brother, set off for the west of England, on which route a regular correspondence was kept up with Lady Hamilton, who at this time was troubled very much, as her husband kindly informed his noble friend, with "convulsive complaints in the stomach, and vomitings, which required some confinement, and obliged her to take a little tartar emetic!!" This was written on the twentieth of February, and at the beginning of the following month Sir William says, "Emma is certainly much better, but not quite free from bile."

It was in this interval that the child was born, of whom so much has been said, and about whose origin so much mystery is supposed to exist. The birth took place in Sir William Hamilton's own house, where every care and precaution had been adopted to keep the matter as secret as possible from him, and from one or two prying members of his own family, though less scruple was observed with re-

spect to another, which at least had an equal interest in the event. Professional attendance was not necessary, where a skilful and well practised mother resided on the spot: and as soon as the patient was capable of moving about, which, owing to her remarkable constitution, was tolerably early, the infant was conveyed by her in a large muff, and in her own carriage, to the house of the person who had been provided to take charge of it in Little Titchfield Street. On this occasion, her Ladyship was accompanied by Lord Nelson's confidential agent, Mr. Oliver, who had been brought up from the age of twelve years in the house and under the protection of Sir William Hamilton at Naples, and was afterwards employed on various kinds of missions in that country, Germany, and England. The condition of the infant, when brought in this manner to the appointed nurse, was deplorable enough, and plainly shewed the hurried process by which it had bee

ushered into the world, but which appearances could not well be described in this memoir. Now it is for the reader to judge whether any one but a mother would have conveyed a new born babe in this extraordinary manner, in her own carriage, to the house of a woman with whom she had no acquaintance, and that too accompanied by an old confidential steward?

But should any doubt still be started on the subject, after so palpable an evidence, the subsequent acknowledgment of the infant by the parties who were most concerned in the history of her origin must wholly remove the smallest shade of scepticism from the mind of the incredulous. That Lady Hamilton made no scruple of admitting the relation, after the death of her husband, can be easily proved; and in what a tender estimation the noble lord regarded the child the world has not to learn. It has been said, indeed, that being his godchild, and

adopted by him on that account, his affection for her became ardent even to a degree of paternal fondness. But the truth is, that in the proper sense of the word, she was not his godchild, for he neither appeared at the font in person, nor by proxy. About a fortnight after the birth, indeed, and when the child was by due care and attention rendered an object fit to be seen and removed, she was taken in a coach to Sir William Hamilton's house, that she might be shewn to Lord Nelson, who actually came to town for the purpose. At this time also the child certainly was privately baptised, but not by the curate or minister of the parish. That ceremony, in whatever way it was performed, had not been conducted according to the legitimate rules of the church, which could authorize a registry of the fact; and, therefore, it was found expedient, about two years afterwards, to have the rite duly solemnized in the parish church

of St. Mary-le-Bone, where a curious difficulty occurred for the want of proper instructions being given to the person whose place it was to mention the name, and to describe the parents. It is not a little remarkable, that the friend of his Lordship, who privately baptised the infant, and who might be supposed to have a thorough knowledge of the forms and orders of the church, did not take due care to give the necessary directions with respect to the name and parentage of the child.

When the usual question was asked by the officiating minister, he received for answer, that the name of the child was "Horatia Nelson," by which he accordingly baptised her, though it was intended by her friends that the first should have been the christian, and the latter the surname. At the time of the registry this error was discovered when too late, and as the parents could not be stated with safety, the entry presents the

insulated peculiarity of a child regularly baptised, and registered without the name of either father or mother.

The name of Thomson, afterwards added to the baptismal one of Horatia Nelson, was merely adopted from necessity, to complete the register; but how it came to be assumed in this instance it may be necessary here to explain. Apprehensive that something of a very delicate nature would necessarily occur in their correspondence, Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton agreed to write to each other under the fictitious characters of Mr. and Mrs. Thomson, and the letters so designated always passed through the hands of their confidential agent. But as an epistolary intercourse with Lady Hamilton had been kept up, ever since their first acquaintance, with the knowledge of Sir William, it was still continued at the time when this secret one was conducted; and in some of those letters his Lordship occasionally men-

tioned Mrs. Thomson and her child, in terms of great affection, but still in such a way as to prevent any suspicion or discovery.

Thus, very shortly after the circumstance took place, in the house of Sir William Hamilton, his Lordship, in writing to Emma from Deal, has these remarkable expressions, pointed plainly enough to her, though sufficiently cautious and circuitous to deceive the knight.

"You cannot think how my feelings are alive towards you; probably more than ever; and they never can be diminished. My hearty endeavours shall not be wanting, to improve and to give us NEW TIES of regard and affection. I have seen and talked much with Mrs. Thomson's friend. The fellow seems to eat all my words when I talk of her and his child! He says he never can forget your goodness and kind affection to her and his dear dear child. I have had, you know, the felicity of seeing it, and a

finer child never was produced by any two persons. It was in truth a love-begotten child! I am determined to keep him on board; for I know, if they got together, they would soon have another. But after our two months' trip, I hope they will never be separated; and then let them do as they please."

At the time when his Lordship saw the child, an incident occurred, which proved for what purpose the name of Thomson had been assumed on this occasion. The nurse, who had charge of the infant, on entering the house, was met by Sir William Hamilton, who enquired her name and business. The person who acted as manager of the household, being present to receive her, immediately answered that this was Mrs. Thomson and her child, come to wait upon Lord Nelson, by appointment, and to solicit his favour. On hearing this, the poor old gentleman kindly expressed his wishes for her welfare, and his admiration of the infant,

which she held in her arms. Now, as this woman's name was not Thomson, and she neither bore any relation to the child, nor had a petition to present, the whole fabrication was obviously intended to deceive Sir William, and of course, the assumption of the appellation was altogether a trick, to cloke an improper connexion.

While Nelson lay in the Downs, at the time of the expedition against Boulogne, he wrote as follows to his "dearest Emma:"

"You need not fear all the women in this world; for all others except yourself are pests to me. I know but one; for who can be like my Emma? I am confident you will do nothing which can hurt my feelings; and I will die by torture, sooner than do any thing which could offend you. Give ten thousand kisses to my dear Horatia.

"Yesterday the subject turned on the cow-pox. A gentleman declared, that his

child was inoculated with the cow-pox; and afterwards remained in a house where a child had the small-pox the natural way, and did not catch it. Therefore, here was a full trial with the cow-pox. The child is only feverish for two days; and only a slight inflammation of the arm takes place, instead of being all over scabs. But do you what you please."

Notwithstanding this opinion in favour of vaccination, the child was inoculated at the close of the summer, for the small-pox, by the advice of the late Dr. Rowley, who was an inveterate enemy to the Jennerian discovery; and during the disease, a furnished house was taken, purposely for the nurse, in Sloane Street, by Mr. Oliver, who also resided there, till the recovery was complete.

Trifling as this may appear, it proves the tenderness of the relation, and the absolute conviction which Nelson had that the child was his own; and how he regarded the mother, is manifest from the

following expressions in a letter written at Deal, the eighteenth of August, this year.

"May heaven bless me very soon with a sight of your dear angelic face. You are a nonpareil! No, not one fit to wipe your shoes. I am, ever have been, and always will remain, your most firm, fixed, and unalterable friend."

If any thing could possibly aggravate the inhumanity with which Lady Nelson was treated, through the whole of this eventful year, it was the painful consideration, that the woman who had robbed her of peace was entrusted with the office of separating her wardrobe from the things belonging to his Lordship, in Norfolk; and after ransacking the whole, sending her what she pleased. A man of truly liberal sentiments would have shuddered at such an act of indelicacy; and had Lady Hamilton possessed the smallest degree of shame, she would have declined the commission, and recommended that

it to be performed by some one of his Lordship's own female relations. Instead, however, of being actuated by any thing like sensibility, this unfeeling woman conducted herself with exultation at the conquest which she had made, and gladly embraced every opportunity that her ascendency over the mind of Nelson afforded of inflicting a fresh wound in the heart of his wife.

This summer, Sir William Hamilton, at the desire of his noble friend, completed the purchase for him of Merton-place, in Surry, about eight miles from London; and the object which his Lordship had in this was to accommodate all the parties under one roof, and to leave the estate as a testimony of his friendship to Emma. Here was another instance of Sir William's excessive meanness; for while he readily acceded to his friend's wishes, he took care to modify his own will accordingly; and knowing that his widow would be thus comfortably settled,

he bequeathed her only seven hundred pounds a-year, leaving all the rest of his property, which was considerable, to his nephew, and other relations.

In the whole of this business, and the improvements which were made on the farm, Lady Hamilton had a principal concern, as, indeed, her interest, and that of the child, had been the sole inducement to the purchase and settlement. Though his Lordship had not seen this estate, he was resolved to be pleased with the situation, and with all that had been done to render the house and grounds agreeable, merely because the place was adorned by the presence and the talents of his Calypso.

"You may rely upon one thing," says he, "that I shall like Merton; therefore do not be uneasy on that account. I have that opinion of your taste and judgment, that I do not believe it can fail in pleasing me. We must only consider our means; and for the rest, I am sure you will soon

make it the prettiest place in the world." Adverting then to the child, who naturally engrossed much of his thoughts, he says:

"Whatever, my dear Emma, you do for my little charge, I must be pleased with. Probably, she will be lodged at Merton; at least, in the spring, when she can have the benefit of our walks. It will make the poor mother happy, I am sure."

The following passage in the same letter cannot be passed over without observation: "Have we," inquires his Lordship, "a nice church at Merton? We will set an example of goodness to the under parishioners." Thus, like many who flatter themselves that an external respect for the forms of religion will be admitted as an equivalent for the observance of its precepts, this great man imagined that his rank and character would give so much effect to his constant attendance at church, as to render his pri-

vate obliquities of no moment to society. Such an example of goodness to the under parishioners was very proper as far as it went; but if any of those persons made an inquiry into the manner of life which was led by the family at Merton-place, they would have been very little edified by the appearance of his Lordship and his friends at the parish church. It is to be lamented, that this very letter contained a melancholy evidence of the noble writer's notions of that purity of heart which can alone render worship acceptable, or example efficacious; for thus he speaks of his aged parent, and his virtuous wife:

"I had yesterday a letter from my father: he seems to think that he may do something which I shall not like. I suppose he means going to Somerset Street. Shall I, to an old man, enter upon the detestable subject: it may shorten his days. But I think I shall tell him that I cannot go to Somerset Street to see him. But I

shall not write till I hear your opinion. If I once begin, you know, it will all out about her, and her ill-treatment to her son. But you shall decide."

This total subservience to the will and counsels of the deceiver shewed the weakness to which this eminent man was now reduced; and it is a fact, that while to every one else the artful woman represented Lady Nelson as endeavouring to sacrifice the interests of her husband's relations to the aggrandizement of her son, she filled the mind of the admiral himself with the grossest falsehoods of her Ladyship's cruelties to her own child. Let it not be forgotten, however, that Nelson's letters to his wife, and his last solemn asseveration, made at the time of their separation, completely refute any insinuation to her disadvantage; while at the same time it must be admitted that his writing in the way he did was neither a proof of his own candour nor magnanimity. The time was not very remote

when the language of Nelson to his lady was warm, manly, and liberal; indicating a heart wholly uncorrupted, and animated by the sentiments of honour and love; but now he could stoop to asperse the same woman with the coarsest epithets when writing to another man's wife, whom he scrupled not to flatter in this fulsome manner: "I assure you, my dear friend, that I had rather read and hear all your little story of a white hen getting into a tree, an anecdote of Fatima, or hear you call, "Cupidy, Cupidy!" than any speech I shall hear in parliament: because, I know, although you can adapt your language and manners to a child, yet that you can also thunder forth such a torrent of eloquence, that corruption and infamy would sink before your voice, in however exalted a situation it might be placed."

In October his Lordship joined his friends at Merton, between which place and Sir William's house in Piccadilly the winter was divided with considerable

gaiety, and a perpetual round of visitors, among whom were several of the Nelson family, particularly the present head of that house, who unquestionably was far from being deficient in his attentions to the idol of his brother's devotions. This noble Lord certainly cannot be accused of having displayed any zeal against the ascendency of Lady Hamilton over the mind of his illustrious relative; nor, as far as is known, did he ever shew the least disapprobation of that authority which she exercised, where the presence of a wife would have been a more graceful object.

In the summer of 1802, Lord Nelson, accompanied by his brother, Sir William and Lady Hamilton, made a tour through the midland counties into South Wales; but at Blenheim the party experienced no little shock in the slight that was put upon them by the noble family, none of whom condescended to make their appearance, while these visitors were

viewing the mansion. This apparent contempt gave so much offence to the hero of the Nile, that he refused the refreshments which were offered; and his Cleopatra, putting on one of her high airs, said, "I told Nelson that if I had been a queen, after the battle of Aboukir, he should have had a principality, so that Blenheim Park should have been only as a kitchen garden to it."

This extravagant flight gave so much pleasure to Nelson, as to draw tears from his eyes, and a prediction from his tongue, that he had more beds of laurels to gather. But had this great man duly reflected on the character and dignity of the house of Spencer, he would have seen more to admire than censure in their conduct on the present occasion; since whatever inclination the members of that family might have to shew their respect for so distinguished a commander, it was evident that they had more for the interests of virtue. The noble inhabitants of Blenheim would

very gladly have welcomed Nelson under their roof; but when they found him so accompanied, that an attention to him could not be paid, without giving some countenance to an improper connexion, they very prudently retired from observation. If his Lordship had brought Lady Nelson with him, instead of the woman who had supplanted her, the reception would have been different; and, therefore, when he proudly declined the proffered refreshments, he might have considered whether, in fact, he had not committed himself a much greater offence than that which he resented. There were other persons of distinction, in the course of this tour, who felt themselves bound to withhold their personal attentions from the noble admiral, out of a sense of superior duty, and a persuasion that they ought not to sanction by their complaisance, the presence of unblushing infidelity. Is it to be endured, that because a man has rendered uncommon services

to his country, and gained a splendid name by his talents, he may, therefore, dispense with the ordinary forms of civil life, and set at open defiance those rules of action which constitute the vital spring of social order? Shall valorous deeds, and extraordinary powers of mind, atone for the violation of private duty, or be admitted as an apology for an habitual breach of those institutions which all nations and ages have concurred in pronouncing sacred?

Though Lady Hamilton found some pliable dispositions in England, of both sexes, who were ready enough to favour her with their company, because they wished to court the friendship of her admirer, she had the mortification of seeing that the public feeling was of a much sterner cast, and that the body of the people, while they followed the hero with their acclamations, pitied him at the same moment for his weakness as a man. Of this blended sentiment the party experi-

enced many instances during their journey through the principality, as well as in various parts of England; but they had been so long used to the dissolute manners of the worst part of Italy, as to "care for none of these things." At all the entertainments which were given, by corporate bodies, and other public assemblies, in honour of the gallant admiral and his companions, Lady Hamilton never failed to enliven the festive board by her vocal powers, the charming effects of which were constantly trumpeted to the world through the medium of the daily and provincial newspapers.

At the beginning of September, the travellers returned to Merton, where, for the most part, they continued to reside during the following winter; but in March, Sir William Hamilton, being taken seriously ill, was conveyed to his residence in town, where he died on the sixth of April, in the presence of his wife and Lord Nelson. In his last

moments, he is reported to have addressed himself to his Lordship in these words:—"Brave and great Nelson! our friendship has been long, and I glory in my friend. I hope you will see justice done to Emma by ministers, for you know how great her services have been, and what she has done for her country. Protect my dear wife; and may God bless you; and give you victory, and protect you in battle!" Then turning to his Lady, he said, "My incomparable Emma, you have never in thought, word, or deed, offended me; and let me thank you again, and again, for your affectionate kindness to me, all the time of our ten years' happy union."

By a codicil to his will, made about a week before his death, Sir William bequeathed to his noble friend a picture of Emma in enamel; and his Lordship, in a strain of uncommon generosity, settled upon her, two months afterwards, an annuity of twelve hundred pounds, to be paid in monthly portions. This was

equivalent to the pension which had been granted to Sir William at the expiration of his embassy, and the continuance of which was solicited in vain by his widow. There was a striking contrast between the conduct of Nelson, and that of Sir William's family, particularly the nephew, who compelled her Ladyship to quit the house in Piccadilly within a month after the death of her husband. Thus she found the instability of that friendship which is cemented by selfish motives; and she might, if prudence had been admitted to her counsels, have learnt from hence, that the admiration which is not excited by virtue has never any chance of being matured into esteem. This harsh treatment on the part of her oldest acquaintance and protector was embittered by the silent contempt thrown on her memorial for a pension, as the relict of an ambassador, and one that had particular claims of her own for a liberal allowance from the government. But it was so well known by the cabinet, that

the Sicilian embassy had neither been honourable in the management, nor economical in the expenditure, that no regard was paid to the petition of her Ladyship, though it was supported by the powerful exertions of her noble friend, whose recommendation of her claims brought with it so many unpleasant recollections, as tended, in a great measure, to defeat the object which the parties had in view.

It has been said that Lord Nelson, on the death of Sir William, immediately removed into private lodgings, being actuated by a delicate regard to the widow's reputation, and a laudable care to avoid giving any handle to a bad and censorious world. The motive certainly was just and proper, but it is strange that the mind in which it arose should not have seen the necessity of observing the same line of conduct in the country as in London, since if there was any thing wrong in his continuing under the roof of Lady Hamil-

ton in Piccadilly, after the death of her husband, there was just as much in her living with him at Merton. It is much to be lamented, that this wish to avoid giving occasion for the surmises and rumours of the ill-disposed part of mankind, did not result from the conscientious principle of having endeavoured to merit the confidence of the good, which would have led the hero, and the object of his admiration, to study such a line of conduct as might have placed them, like the wife of Cæsar, above all suspicion.

CHAP. XIV.

This then is liberty, the truth to tell;
To our dear country wishing all things well.
EURIPIDES.

SOON after the death of Sir William Hamilton, his widow took a house in Clarges Street, between which and Merton her time was divided; but within a few weeks she was deprived of the company of her noble friend and admirer, in consequence of his being appointed to the command of the fleet in the Mediterranean. In a letter written to her from thence, his Lordship gave this extract from one which he had sent just before to the Queen of Naples: "I left Lady Hamilton the eighteenth of May; and so attached to your Majesty, that I am sure

she would lay down her life to preserve your's. Your Majesty never had a more sincere, attached, and real friend, than your dear Emma. You will be sorry to hear that good Sir William Hamilton did not leave her in such comfortable circumstances as his fortune would have allowed. He has given it amongst his relations. But she will do honour to his memory, although every one else of his friends call loudly against him on that account."

In all this, however, the noble writer judged wrong; for when the rise of this woman is considered, the settlement of seven hundred a-year will hardly be thought by any reasonable person to have been an inadequate provision. Besides, as economy had never been one of her virtues, Sir William knew well enough that a larger annuity would only have increased her extravagance; and the event proved that he acted with judgment in this disposal of his property. What honour she did to the memory of the man who had

elevated her from a low situation, and one, indeed, that was worse than servile, to affluence and dignity, will appear from the fact that she declined the publication of his papers, letters, and memoirs; though when Nelson fell, one of her first considerations was that of hiring a mercenary scribbler to write such a history of the hero as should set forth her virtues and talents, in unison with his merits, to the best advantage. A literary friend of Sir William Hamilton urged the propriety of giving to the world a biographical account of one who had so eminently distinguished himself, not only in a diplomatic capacity, but as an antiquary, and a scientific observer. This suggestion having been treated very disrespectfully, induced the person who made it to write rather freely to her Ladyship on the subject; and then, with her usual address, she endeavoured to recall the words which had been uttered in contempt of a civil and disinterested proposal. The

letter which she wrote by way of apology was as follows :

Clarges Street, April 23rd, 1804.

Sir,

I was very much surprised on receiving your letter this morning, as I cannot think what you mean by my being offended, nor who could have told you so. Mr. O. spoke to me about your wish to have some information about Sir William's pursuits, whilst on his embassy at Naples, which, I said, I should be very glad to give you myself, as many persons had asked me the same ; but I had been so very unwell, I had not either health or spirits to enter on the subject with strangers. But I told Mrs. G. if you would do me the favour of calling in Clarges Street, I should be very glad to see you, and tell you myself many very interesting anecdotes of that great and good man. This is all that passed on the occasion, nor can I account for what you wrote me, as I

never spoke to any one, but merely to give the message to Mrs. G. as I thought by so doing I might have been of service to you and Mrs. W. to whom I beg my compliments, and am,

Sir, your obedient
humble servant,
EMMA HAMILTON.

P. S. If you will let me know by a line any morning, you will favour me by calling, I will be at home.

Now this was all mere duplicity and affectation, for nothing more was recommended to her Ladyship than the publication of her husband's life, and correspondence, as far as related to his literary connexions and philosophical researches; instead of which, she contented herself with communicating orally some trifling stories and amusing incidents, and thus the business ended; nor has any memoir of this remarkable character yet appeared, though it is evident, from the length of

his residence in Italy, the variety of his engagements, and the extent of his acquaintance, that such a work would have been highly acceptable to the world of letters. But the truth is, she felt so much hurt at the manner in which the property of Sir William had been bequeathed, that she cared as little for his honour after his death, as she had been mindful of it in his life-time. In the attentions of the Nelson family, however, she became consoled for the supposed neglect with which she had been treated by her husband and his friends. The niece of the noble admiral was settled in the family of her Ladyship, that she might profit by the instructions and example of so accomplished a person. This was certainly a very extraordinary proof of friendship and confidence on the part of the young lady's parents, though there were not wanting persons who looked upon it in a light not at all flattering to the judgment or discretion of his Lordship's relations.

Dr. Nelson, the present earl, having obtained, through his brother's interest, a prebendal stall in the cathedral of Canterbury, was very assiduous at this period in his respects to Lady Hamilton, who spent part of the summer with him at that city, accompanied by Mrs. Billington. The inhabitants of Canterbury were not a little surprised at the appearance of such visitors in the house of one of their reverend dignitaries; and more so, when it was proposed that these enchanting females should delight and edify the frequenters of the cathedral with a sacred duet. This offer, however, was far from being relished by the grave characters who acted as the guardians of that venerable fabric; and the respectable citizens had so much of the Bœotian dulness, that at the end of their cards of invitation to the new prebendary and his family, they made it a point to subjoin this curious condition, "But not Lady Hamilton." These old-fashioned people, in the country, seem to

have fancied that when the voice of the world was loud respecting the dominion of this woman over the mind of the hero, his nearest friends ought to have discountenanced the rumour, by treating her at the utmost with distant respect. It undoubtedly did wear a very strange aspect, that while an amiable wife was discarded for no offence, all the relations of the admiral, and particularly his brother, whose station in the church called for the greatest circumspection, should be extremely diligent in cultivating the acquaintance of the person who had made such an inroad on the harmony of their family. That they were ignorant of the interest which Lady Hamilton possessed in the affections of their noble relative, can hardly be supposed; and to the sentiments of the public on that unhappy connexion, it was almost impossible for them to have been strangers.

Not long after the sailing of Nelson, another female infant made its appear-

ance at Merton, which obtained the name of Emma; but it died early the following year, in a convulsive fit. From the letters which his Lordship wrote to the mother, while he was employed off Toulon, it is necessary to make a few extracts here, as confirming, beyond the possibility of any doubt, his absolute devotedness to Lady Hamilton, and shewing that the footing on which they lived was perfectly well known to his most intimate friends. "I rejoice," says he, "that you have had so pleasant a trip into Norfolk; and I hope one day to carry you there by a nearer TIE in law, but not in love and affection than at present." Then alluding to his excellent wife, who had been aspersed, as usual, in one of her rival's ensnaring epistles, his Lordship adds, "I wish you would never mention that person's name. It works up your anger, for no useful purpose. Her good or bad character of me or thee no one cares about." Thus the completest evidence is

afforded not only of the entire controul which Lady Hamilton had over the mind of Nelson, but of her baseness in calumniating the woman whom she had supplanted. Had the hero felt as became him, he would have resented these malignant arts, which were adopted to inflame him against the person who, of all others, had the strongest claim upon him for gratitude and protection. But if any thing could add to the severity with which his injured lady was treated at this period, it was the cruel neglect of those branches of the family who had formerly courted her company, and been pleased with her correspondence. Finding that such an intimacy would be no longer agreeable to their illustrious relative, and that, on the contrary, the only sure method of securing his favour lay in flattering the object of his admiration, these persons took special care to avoid giving him any reason to complain of a want of courtesy where they knew it

was most acceptable. They were indeed plainly assured by his Lordship, " that in manifesting their kind attentions to Lady Hamilton they would be sure of a warm place in his heart."

After the death of Sir William, he conducted himself towards her as his wife, and they actually pledged their faith to each other in that capacity; and in the month of August the same year he wrote to her in these strong terms, when anticipating a speedy blessed meeting. " The thoughts of such happiness, my dearest only beloved, makes the blood fly into my head. The call of our country is a duty which you would deservedly in the cool moments of reflection reprobate, was I to abandon it; and I should feel so disgraced, by seeing you ashamed of me, no longer saying, " This is the man who has saved his country! this is he who is the first to go forth to fight our battles, and the last to return, and then all these honours to reflect on you. Ah! they will think,

what a man! What sacrifices has he not made to secure our homes and property; even the society and happy union with the finest and most accomplished woman in the world. As you love, how must you feel!—my heart is with you: cherish it. I shall, my best beloved, return—if it pleases God—a victor; and it shall be my study to transmit an unsullied name. There is no desire of wealth, no ambition that could keep me from all my soul holds dear. No; it is to save my country, my wife, in the eye of God, &c."

About two months afterwards, his Lordship expressed himself in these terms: "As for old Queensberry, he may put you into his will, or scratch you out, as he pleases: I care not. If Mr. Addington gives you a pension, it is well; but do not let it fret you. Have you not Merton? It is clear—the first purchase—and my dear Horatia is provided for; and I hope, one of these days that you will be my own Duchess of Bronte; and then

a fig for them all!—I am glad to find, my dear Emma, that you mean to take Horatia home. Aye! she is like her mother; will have her own way, or kick up a devil of a dust. But you will cure her: I am afraid I should spoil her; for I am sure I would shoot any one who would hurt her."

It appears that Lady Hamilton at this time had formed the romantic scheme of leaving England, accompanied by the niece of Nelson, Horatia, and Oliver, with the view of being received on board the Victory; but much as the Admiral desired a meeting, he had too much good sense to accede to so imprudent a measure, especially as he had himself given orders that no women should be carried to sea in his ship. His remonstrance on this subject was tender, but firm and judicious. "I know my own dear Emma," said he, "if she will let her reason have fair play, will say I am right: but she is, like Horatia, very angry if

she cannot have her own way. Her Nelson is called upon, in the most honourable manner, to defend his country! Absence to us is equally painful: but if I had either stayed at home, or neglected my duty abroad, would not my Emma have blushed for me? She could never have heard of my praises; and how the country looks up..... I am writing, my dear Emma, to reason the point with you; and I am sure you will see it in its true light."

These sentiments did credit to the understanding of the noble writer, and it would have been happy if he had acted with equal steadiness in every instance where his judgment had to contend with his passions. Lady Hamilton led a life of such extravagance at this period, that the allowance which she had from his Lordship, and the annuity derived from the will of her husband, proved inadequate to the supply of her wants. Surrounded by hungry foreigners and a set

of needy parasites, both her house in town, as well as that in Surry, exhibited a continual round of luxury and gaiety, which could not be supported even by the liberal means which she possessed, and the occasional presents she received. His Lordship frequently gave her some gentle monitions on the necessity of economy, and the propriety of living more at Merton than in London, because it would be attended with less expense. The watering-places also, to which her Ladyship was in the habit of going in the summer months, gave him some uneasiness, on account of the enormous charges which attended it: but so long as these excursions did Emma service, he consoled himself under the pressure, at the same time observing that "it was expedient to be great economists, to make both ends meet, and to carry on the intended improvements at Merton." The following is a good remark, but it was lost upon the person to whom it was

addressed: " Your good, angelic heart, my dearest beloved Emma, will fully agree with me: every thing is very expensive; and even we find it, and will be obliged to economise, if we assist our friends: and I am sure we should feel more comfort in it than in loaded tables, and entertaining a set of people who care not for us."

But his fair angelic friend was of a very different opinion, and all his moralizing on order and frugality was wholly thrown away, as he found to his vexation, though nothing could operate upon his infatuated mind to lay any restraint upon her conduct. He saw enough, however, in this imprudence of the mother to make it necessary to provide a separate settlement for the child, that she might not be too great a sufferer by parental folly. His Lordship thus mentions the subject in March, 1804: " I shall, when I come home, settle four thousand pounds in trustees' hands for Horatia; for I will not

put it in my own power to have her left destitute: for she would want friends, if we left her in this world. She shall be independent of any smiles or frowns!"

This resolution he was happily enabled to accomplish, and thus the child of his dearest affections was secured from that misery into which she would most probably have fallen but for this moderate provision; since from the liberality of the family to which she had an equivocal relation she could hardly hope for any support. It would have added to the prudence of this measure if Nelson had taken care to preserve Merton also for the child; and no doubt it was his opinion that by this purchase he had effectually provided an asylum for her in the event of losing her parents. The manner in which Lady Hamilton deported herself, and the company she kept, might have taught him the propriety of some proceedings for this purpose; but whenever demands were made upon him, he found

it impossible to resist them, though he fretted within himself, and vented his murmurs of disapprobation to the person who occasioned his embarrassments, but who had no feeling for his uneasiness.

One method which she had of gaining her point was by alarming the fears of Nelson with insinuations concerning the great offers that she had received from noblemen of very high distinction. These intimations, which were the mere coinage of her invention, had the effect desired on his Lordship's mind, and made him still more dutiful and attentive to the commands of this artful and rapacious woman. Among others whose civilities she contrived to turn to an advantage in this manner was the late Duke of Queensberry, who followed her, as he did every handsome woman that came in his way, with as much assiduity as if he had been in the prime of his days. At Merton and in Piccadilly this silly old man was quite delighted with

the enchanting attitudes and vocal powers of the lively widow, who on her part was not backward in using every art of pleasing the amorous dotard. Nelson, however, had discernment enough left not to be much afraid of any serious proposal coming from that quarter, for he knew that the Duke, whatever might be his propensities, was a determined enemy to matrimony, of which institution he generally spoke with contempt. But the presents which were made to this nobleman, with the express view of propitiating his good graces in behalf of Lady Hamilton, and to secure the remembrance of her in his will, did little honour to the persons from whom they came, and who in their private conversation and correspondence treated him with unmeasured ridicule.

While Nelson was in the Mediterranean, he discovered, what he might have found out long before if his passion had not blinded his judgment, that there was

no real principle of friendship in the Queen of Naples for his beloved Emma, though her Majesty had vowed towards that lady "eternal gratitude." To all his letters on the subject of the necessities of Lady Hamilton, and the strong claims which he urged on her behalf, the Queen returned very ambiguous and cool answers, which drew from his Lordship some very severe observations on her character and conduct; while Lady Hamilton avenged herself by relations of the Queen's amours, in doing which she had not wit enough to perceive that she was at the same instant bringing her own reputation completely under suspicion, for having been so long associated with a personage of that description.

But during this year she had various causes of vexation, and multiplied evidences that the esteem of Nelson could not secure the attachment of her old friends; for a violent quarrel arose between her Ladyship and Mr. Greville

about the construction of his uncle's will, and the payment of her annuity. The business was indeed settled, but not much to the satisfaction of her Ladyship; and the admiral was so greatly provoked at the intelligence, that he was almost tempted to urge a suit at law.

One of the most extraordinary instances of human weakness appears in the following letter, which Nelson wrote to his child, who was then only three years old:

Victory, April 13th, 1804.

"My dear Horatia,

"I send you twelve books of Spanish dresses, which you will let your guardian angel, Lady Hamilton, keep for you when you are tired of looking at them. I am very glad to hear that you are perfectly recovered, and that you are a very good child. I beg, my dear Horatia, that you will always continue so; which will be a great comfort to your most affectionate

NELSON AND BRONTE."

At the same time he sent a very singular letter to his niece, in which he mentions this child in the following manner:—" I feel truly sensible of your kind regard for that dear little orphan, Horatia. Although her parents are lost, yet she is not without a fortune: and I shall cherish her to the last moment of my life; and curse them who curse her, and Heaven bless them who bless her! Dear innocent! she can have injured no one. I am glad to hear that she is attached to you; and, if she takes after her parents, so she will to those who are kind to her."

There was a degree of duplicity in writing thus to a female relation, on a subject which did not require any correspondence at all; but there was a much greater meanness in suffering this young lady to reside in a dependent capacity with Lady Hamilton, whose dissipated turn of mind was well known to all who were admitted at Merton on a familiar

footing. Whatever were the accomplishments of her Ladyship in other respects, few persons, who had any regard for the substantial attainments which constitute the great excellence of the female character, would for any consideration have placed a favourite daughter in such a family.

The company at Merton was certainly far from that cast to which any parent of elevated sentiments would be inclined to introduce his child. Here might be found Italian singers and English performers, newspaper editors, and miserable poetasters, adventurers without character, and ladies whose names were no recommendation at court. Much has been said of the exuberant loyalty of Lady Hamilton, and her advocates have dwelt very much on this brilliant feature in her disposition, but if she really merited the encomiums which have been so extravagantly paid her on this account, she would hardly have encouraged the most rancor-

ous party writers, virulent satirists, and determined republicans, at her table. The names of these persons could easily be mentioned, and the author of these memoirs is not unacquainted with the freedom of the conversation which took place at these entertainments, and the communications there made on political subjects.

At the beginning of the year 1805, this woman had the vanity and assurance, when writing to Mr. Alexander Davidson, to subjoin, what she properly enough called, "some of her bad verses on her soul's idol!" Disagreeable as it is to dwell upon this shocking connexion, to which so many persons gave their countenance, whose situations in life called for another line of behaviour, the present volume would be incomplete without this specimen of Lady Hamilton's poetical talents, and of the delicacy of her moral principles, both of which have been celebrated by her flatterers:

EMMA TO NELSON.

I think I have not lost my heart,
  Since I with truth can swear;
At every moment of my life,
  I feel my Nelson there!

If from thine Emma's breast, her heart
  Were stolen, or flown away,
Where, where, should she my Nelson's love
  Record, each happy day?

If from thine Emma's breast, her heart
  Were stolen, or flown away,
Where, where, should she engrave, my love!
  Each tender word you say?

Where, where, should Emma treasure up
  Her Nelson's smiles and sighs?
Where, mark with joy, each secret look
  Of love from Nelson's eyes?

Then do not rob me of my heart,
  Unless you first forsake it;
And then so wretched it would be,
  Despair alone will take it.

CHAP. XV.

Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows,
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm,
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes;
Youth on the prow, and pleasure at the helm;
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,
That hush'd in grim repose expects his coming prey.
GRAY.

WHEN Lord Nelson arrived at Portsmouth, after his unsuccessful pursuit of the combined French and Spanish fleet, in August, 1805, Lady Hamilton was at Southend with Mrs Billington and Horatia; but on receiving the agreeable intelligence, she hastened to Merton, where the rest of his Lordship's family also assembled to welcome the hero. One person, indeed, was wanting; nor did any mediating voice offer a soothing word to induce the gallant admiral to see his

lady, even as an old acquaintance; and it is a melancholy fact that she never had a single interview with him during his last residence in England. But at Merton all was gaiety on this joyous occasion, and crowds of visitors went thither every day to pay their respects to his Lordship, and the fair ascendant who ruled his affections. Such was the morality which distinguished the zealous admirers of this great man, that they appeared to have laid aside in his presence all those feelings which usually actuate honourable minds, when they are obliged to witness scenes of impurity, and to endure, though but for a moment, the company of women who have lost all sense of shame. That any of the persons thus admitted to a familiar intercourse with the noble owner of Merton Place, and the lady who presided at his table, could be ignorant of the attachment which subsisted between them, cannot be supposed, since it is well known that neither of the parties took the precaution of casting the slight-

est veil over their connexion. On the contrary, they both gloried in it, and it was customary for his Lordship, at receiving his visitors, to introduce them to the lady of the house as the complete mistress of the place, "though unfortunately," to use his own phrase, "she was not yet Lady Nelson."

We have seen that when this brave man was at Naples, he expressed his contempt of that court as being the "seat of fiddlers and poets, whores and scoundrels;" yet it is no less strange than true, that his house at Merton exhibited very frequently groups of characters not a whit more respectable than what he so emphatically described in Italy. Opera singers and ballad makers, foreign noblemen and their mistresses, with English players, gamblers, and musicians, were among the favourite guests of Lady Hamilton; though no doubt the genuine qualities and pursuits of some of these personages were studiously concealed from the knowledge of his Lordship. It

may, however, well excite surprise, that this great man did not feel disgusted at the sycophants and harpies who surrounded his table, and whose manners, for the most part, were as coarse as their principles. But so long as Emma was gratified by the adulation which she received, her noble friend appeared to be under an obligation to the persons who bestowed it, especially as he came in himself for no small portion of the incense.

Among other persons who were entertained at Merton was the celebrated Dr. Wolcot, generally known by his poetical appellation of Peter Pindar. This eccentric character, having indulged rather freely one evening in his favourite potation, set fire to his night-cap on going to bed: the cap belonged to Lord Nelson, and the next morning the bard pinned a paper to it with these lines:

Take your night-cap again, my good Lord, I desire;
For I wish not to keep it a minute:
What belongs to a Nelson, where'er there's a fire,
Is sure to be instantly in it.

It had long been the desire of Nelson that Lady Hamilton should take Horatia home to live with her; and this she not only engaged to do in her letters, but she actually informed him that the child was settled at Merton, which circumstance did not happen till his return, and for this reason, because her Ladyship was unwilling to have such a restraint on her amusements as his charge must necessarily have occasioned. At this period, however, the child was fixed with her, and a small settlement was made for life on the person who had brought her up. Insignificant as such circumstances may seem, they serve to throw light on the history of this extraordinary connexion, as well as on the characters of those who were interested in it, and who were the depositaries of the hero's confidence.

The present Earl perhaps may recollect who it was that, after the death of his brother, ordered the nurse to hand over to him the instrument by which the annuity was settled upon her, and the

bitterness with which the poor woman was treated for bringing only a copy of the deed, which, on receiving, he hurried out of the room; but when he discovered that this was not the original, he hastened back, and behaved with such indecent outrage as even to hurt the feelings of his own wife, who was insulted by him for taking the poor woman's part.

That document was framed under Lord Nelson's inspection by his own solicitor and executor; its validity therefore required no proof: nor was it doubtful for what services the grant had been made. This of course is an additional testimony to the fact that the child was admitted by the admiral to be his own; though, if the slightest shade of uncertainty could be supposed to exist in the mind of any unbiassed person, it must be removed by this codicil to his will: "I give and bequeath to Miss Horatia Nelson Thompson, who was baptized on the 13th of May last, in the parish of St. Mary-le-bone, in the county of Middlesex,

by Benjamin Lawrence, curate, and John Willock, assistant clerk, (and who I acknowledge as my adopted daughter) the sum of £4,000 sterling money of Great Britain, to be paid at the expiration of six months after my decease, or sooner, if possible; and I leave my dearest friend Emma, Lady Hamilton, sole guardian of the said Horatia Nelson Thompson, until she shall have arrived at the age of eighteen years; and the interest of the said £4,000 to be paid to Lady Hamilton, for her education and maintenance. This request of guardianship I earnestly make of Lady Hamilton, knowing that she will educate my adopted child in the paths of religion and virtue, and give her the accomplishments which so much adorn herself, and, I hope, make her a fit wife for my dear nephew, Horatio Nelson, who I wish to marry her, if he proves worthy, in Lady Hamilton's estimation, of such a treasure, as I am sure she will be."

Infatuated as this extraordinary man

unquestionably was by the delusions which were so cunningly cast over his mind, still it is clear, from this expressive declaration of his sentiments, that in truth he regarded this child in the nearest possible light; for, had she been an orphan cast upon his bounty, he would have stated who were her parents; and, if she was the offspring of any obscure persons, he would hardly have recommended her in the way he did to his nephew, of whom he was always very fond. The impudent writer of the memoirs of Lord Nelson, composed under the inspection of Lady Hamilton, allows plainly enough that this was his Lordship's child; but insinuates that the mother was dead, at the time when that scandalous account was published. But if this had been the case, why was not the name of the woman mentioned; and how happened it that no one ever claimed any parental relation to the infant, from the time of its birth, except Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton? But to put this matter beyond all doubt,

a passage from one of his Lordship's last letters to the woman who had captivated his affections, and alienated him from his connubial duties, will shew the entire conviction which he had that this child constituted the link that united him to the object of his admiration. "I intreat, my dear Emma," says he, "that you will cheer up: and we will look forward to many, many happy years, and be surrounded by our children's children. God Almighty can, when he pleases, remove the impediment."

Shocking and profane as this last observation is, for it could have only one meaning, that which precedes it is an express acknowledgment that there was then existing a living pledge of their mutual attachment; for, otherwise, his language must be absolute nonsense. In speaking of children, he could not allude to the distant prospect of a union after the death of his wife; for both he and Lady Hamilton were now arrived at a period when issue was hardly to be expected.

His cheering remark, therefore, must have been grounded on the object which they already enjoyed, and the fond hope that the honours of Nelson would descend to the fruits of that alliance which his Lordship had fondly projected between his nephew and the child whom he called his adopted daughter.

The author of the scandalous memoirs, for such they are, as being written for no other purpose than to palliate an intercourse which cannot be named without the severest censure, has spoken of the loves of these persons in terms of admiration; though he allows that had Lady Nelson died, their marriage would certainly have taken place. Now this hireling knew, for he had the documents before him at the time, that, while Sir William Hamilton was living, a correspondence was carried on between his lady and Nelson, which went far beyond the limits of innocent esteem and virtuous friendship.

Here we are compelled reluctantly once more to notice that abominable insult upon all truth and modesty, because it exhibits another atrocious instance of her Ladyship's utter want of integrity and delicacy, even where the honour of her hero was particularly affected by the story which she invented. Not content with evincing the unqualified supremacy which she had over the heart of Nelson, this intriguing woman was resolved to participate in the glory which exclusively belonged to him, and to have her share of the laurels which he so proudly earned. As she pretended to have contributed most effectually to the victory of Aboukir by her influence in Sicily, so, at the last, she had the hardihood to claim the merit of having been the cause of that at Trafalgar. Accordingly, to substantiate this assumption, she dictated to her amanuensis at Merton the following tale, which appeared first in the historical romance published by Lady Hamilton's

means; and, what is still worse, it has been most imprudently copied from thence into Southey's Life of Nelson. The story is as follows: "When Captain Blackwood arrived at Merton with the news that the combined fleets had arrived at Cadiz, Lord Nelson is stated to have treated it lightly, having no intention to go to sea again, and contenting himself with saying, 'Let the man trudge it who has lost his budget:' but," observes the narrator, "amid all this *allegro* of the tongue to his friends at Merton Place, Lady Hamilton observed that his countenance, from that moment, wore occasional marks of the *penseroso* in his bosom. In this state of mind he was pacing one of the walks of Merton garden, which he always called the quarter-deck, when Lady Hamilton told him that she perceived he was low and uneasy. He smiled and said,—'No! I am as happy as possible:' adding, that he saw himself surrounded by his family; that he found his health

better since he had been at Merton; and that he would not give a sixpence to call the king his uncle. Her Ladyship replied, that she did not believe what he said; and that she would tell him what was the matter with him. That he was longing to get at these French and Spanish fleets; that he considered them as his property, and would be miserable if any other man but himself did the business; that he must have them as the price and reward of his long watching, and two years uncomfortable situation in the Mediterranean; and finished by saying,—'Nelson, however we may lament your absence, and your so speedily leaving us, offer your services immediately, to go off Cadiz: they will be accepted, and you will gain a quiet heart by it. You will have a glorious victory; and then you may come here, have your *otium cum dignitate*, and be happy.' He looked at her Ladyship for some moments; and, with tears in his eyes, exclaimed,—

'Brave Emma! good Emma! if there were more Emmas, there would be more Nelsons. You have penetrated my thoughts. I wish all you say, but was afraid to trust even myself with reflecting on the subject. However, I will go to town.' He went accordingly, next morning, accompanied by her Ladyship, and his sisters. They left him at the Admiralty, on the way to Lady Hamilton's house in Clarges Street; and soon after received a note, informing them that the Victory was telegraphed not to go into port, and begging they would prepare every thing for his departure. This," says the biographer, "is the true history of that affecting affair. Her Ladyship feels, most severely, that she was the cause of his going: but as she loved his glory, she could not resist giving him such advice."

Now in all this "true history," as the writer has the audacity to call it, there is not one particle of truth; for Captain

Blackwood called at Merton by appointment, to apprise him of the news; immediately on which, and before Lady Hamilton knew any thing of the matter, his Lordship expressed his satisfaction at the intelligence, being convinced that he should now be able to give Villeneuve a drubbing. He accordingly began to arrange matters for his speedy departure; having, indeed, already held consultations with the Admiralty on the subject. Bound, as Nelson was, in the fascinating arms of his Dalilah, he had not lost his sense of public duty, nor his love of glory. But though he cannot, in justice, be deprived of the merit of having acted with perfect freedom of mind, in following the call of honour to the last wreath which it procured him, yet a melancholy evidence appeared under his own hand to prove how completely his affections remained spell-bound to the last day of his existence. In the morning, when he was preparing for action, with the enemy in view,

he drew up the following very extraordinary statement, as a kind of testamentary bequest.

" Whereas the eminent services of Emma Hamilton, widow of the Right Honourable Sir William Hamilton, have been of the very greatest service to our king and country, to my knowledge, without her receiving any reward from either our king or country:

" First, that she obtained the King of Spain's letter, in 1796, to his brother the King of Naples, acquainting him of his inclination to declare war against England; from which letter the ministry sent out orders to the then Sir John Jervis, to strike a stroke, if opportunity afforded, against either the arsenals of Spain, or her fleets: that neither of these was done, is not the fault of Lady Hamilton; the opportunity might have been offered.

" Secondly, the British fleet under my command could never have returned the

second time to Egypt, had not Lady Hamilton's influence with the Queen of Naples caused letters to be wrote to the governor of Syracuse, that he was to encourage the fleet being supplied with every thing, should they put into any port in Sicily. We put into Syracuse, and received every supply; went to Egypt, and destroyed the French fleet.

" Could I have rewarded these services, I would not now call upon my country. But as that has not been in my power, I leave Emma Hamilton, therefore, a legacy to my king and country; that they will give her an ample provision to maintain her rank in life.

" I also leave to the beneficence of my country my adopted daughter, Horatia Nelson Thompson, and I desire she will use, in future, the name of Nelson only.

" These are the only favours I ask of my king and country, at this moment, when I am going to fight their battle.

" May God bless my king and country,

and all those I hold dear! My relations it is needless to mention; they will, of course, be amply provided for."

That his Lordship felt the truth of what is stated in this paper cannot be questioned; but it has been already seen that her Ladyship's merits, even as here represented, were shamefully overrated; and that in reality she had no claims at all for acts which her husband ought to have performed; while of the first it may be said, that however adroitly it was managed, it had in it more art than honesty.

When it was ascertained that the wound which Nelson received was mortal, his thoughts fluctuated wholly between his glory and his love. "I am going fast," said he: "it will be all over with me soon. Let my dear Lady Hamilton have my hair, and all other things belonging to me." Afterwards he observed, "What would become of poor Lady Hamilton if she knew my situation!" On being informed of the number of ships cap-

tured, he expressed his satisfaction, and then reverting again to the subject most interesting to his mind, he said, "Take care of my dear Lady Hamilton, Hardy: take care of poor Lady Hamilton." Among his last words were these: "Doctor, remember me to Lady Hamilton, remember me to Horatia! Tell her I have made a will, and left her a legacy to my country."

Thus fell that illustrious commander, of whom, if we have been compelled to relate some circumstances that cast a shade over his private character, it has solely risen from the necessity of obeying the voice of truth, and of doing justice to the cause of injured virtue; not from a wish to wound the feelings of the living, or to disparage the real merits of the dead.

CHAP. XVI.

When you are liberal of your loves and counsels,
Be sure you are not loose: those you make friends,
And give your hearts to, when they once perceive
The least rub in your fortunes, fall away
Like water from ye, never found again
But where they mean to sink ye.

SHAKESPEARE.

THOUGH Lady Hamilton had some satisfaction in finding that her influence over the great naval chief remained undiminished to the last moment of his existence, that pleasure was soon abated, on perceiving a marked change in the deportment of those who had in his life-time been most desirous of securing his favour by cultivating her acquaintance. She now felt the difference between that attachment which is the effect of esteem, and that which is procured by interest.

The manner in which Lord Nelson remembered her in his will had a powerful effect no doubt in consoling her mind under the loss she had sustained by his death; and the neglect which it produced on the part of those who out of complaisance to him had been accustomed to treat her with superabundant kindness, was somewhat alleviated by the conviction that her dominion over him was not shaken even by the terrors of dissolution.

Her picture and that of Horatia adorned his cabin, and these objects were contemplated by him with as much enthusiastic delight as the representations of saints are beheld by the devout worshippers of the church of Rome. Here let us close the catalogue of Nelson's infirmities, and the mournful display of his inexcusable failings; but before the curtain is drawn over the weak part of his character, it is necessary, for the great end of moral instruction, that a caveat should be entered against that unpardon-

able but too common error of making the splendour of great actions and transcendent talents an excuse for aberrations from the line of private duty, and the still more shameful practice of setting off occasional fits of devotion, and some eminent instances of liberality, as a kind of atonement for habitual adultery. That this extraordinary man had a general reverence for religion, and that he possessed many excellent qualities both of the heart and the understanding, cannot be denied; yet, amidst all this, it must with justice be said of him that he was not so much a virtuous man as an admirer of virtue, and that religion in him was not an active operating principle, but a fluctuating sentiment of mental feeling.

It is greatly to be lamented that few if any exertions were made by those who enjoyed his confidence to draw him from that perilous situation into which he had suffered himself to be deluded; while, on the contrary, it seemed to be the study

of them all to encourage him in his folly, by redoubling their attentions to the enchantress who had bewitched him, in proportion as they saw that he was gratified by these courtesies. His nearest relations, instead of being scandalized by the connexion which he had formed, were eager to gain his favour by courting the smiles of his mistress; and while his unoffending wife was left to pick up the casual pity and consolations of strangers, the woman who had succeeded in exiling her from the house and the heart of her lord revelled in luxury, surrounded by all the branches of the family of both sexes, vying with each other for her friendship, and ambitious of the honour of receiving her into their habitations.

But no sooner did the moving power cease by which these persons were stimulated to cultivate the good opinion of a female, who had a sovereign contempt for the laws by which the social relations are preserved, than they all gradually

dropped the mask, and abandoned the fascinating Emma, because she could no longer further their views, or promote their interest.

Some who had lived under her roof for months, and even years, who were entertained daily at her table, where they laughed at her witticisms, and were enraptured by her melodies, slunk away, and appeared anxious to discard her from their memories. Nay, there were not wanting others, who, after seeking her company with the most ardent professions of esteem, and feeling proud of her correspondence, now turned the heel upon her, and took as it were a pleasure in magnifying all her criminal errors, forgetting that in so doing they condemned themselves for the want of moral delicacy, of candour, and of gratitude.

While her admirer lived, these birds of passage had no dislike to the hospitalities which she delighted to afford, both in Clarges Street and at Merton ; but his

death produced a wonderful alteration in their sense of propriety, and in the expression of their feelings. Their conduct plainly indicated by what principles they had been guided in seeking for the acquaintance of a woman on whom they now turned their backs, and whose character was thus admitted by themselves to have been undeserving of esteem at the very period when she was the object of their grossest flattery.

All these convincing proofs, however, of the capriciousness of that friendship which results from mercenary motives, failed to operate on the mind of Emma, in producing a change of manners, and an attention to economy. Even the extinction of her fondest hope, by the catastrophe of the hero to whom she was attached, had not the effect of correcting her love of pleasure, or moderating her propensity to extravagance. She strove to counteract the mortification produced by the contemptuous neglect which she

experienced in one quarter, by increasing her expense, and enlarging the circle of her acquaintance. In the choice of these new friends she certainly was far from being over scrupulous, and none who felt any concern about the moral qualities of their associates would have been much at their ease in the companies that were usually assembled at Merton Place. The consequence of all this was soon felt in the embarrassments occasioned by the wanton profusion and indiscriminate waste which prevailed in her household, when the reservoir that had formerly supplied the means was wholly dried up. With ordinary prudence, indeed, the income which she derived from the settlement of her husband, and the donations of her noble admirer, would have been amply sufficient for her support in a style fully commensurate with her rank and pretensions. But the cast of characters which she delighted in consisted of creatures whose sole object was to de-

vour all that came within their reach; and while they fastened like locusts upon the fertile spot which allured their presence, the moment that a change took place in its circumstances, they were the first to fall off and fly away. There were indeed two or three persons who offered their advice and services to this improvident woman, with the view of turning her from this course of dissipation and ruin; but all their counsels and remonstrances were thrown away, till the clamours of creditors became too numerous to be slighted, and their measures too hostile to admit of compromise or delay. Within a very few years after the death of Lord Nelson, an account was taken of her Ladyship's debts, by three gentlemen of high reputation; and it being found that she owed about eighteen thousand pounds, it was deemed necessary to dispose of the effects in Surry, as well as the property in London, by which about a surplus of little more than two

thousand pounds was saved from the wreck. This was a lesson which ought to have made a deep impression upon the most thoughtless mind : but though the person who had been so severely taught still possessed more than one thousand pounds a-year, she soon contracted fresh debts, by continuing to pursue the same career of levity and extravagance. About this time the mother died, at an advanced age, in private lodgings in Bond Street ; and her remains were interred in the new burying ground at Paddington.

It is at least some relief from the general pain and disgust excited by the consideration of a life of folly, that there was one feature of virtue uniformly perceptible through the complicated course of deception, voluptuousness, and depravity ; for through the whole of her life, Emma behaved with the most dutiful regard to her parent, of whom she was not ashamed, even when her table was graced by persons of high distinction. Let this then

be remembered to her praise, when the flagitiousness of her conduct in wounding the peace of an excellent woman, and tarnishing the laurels of a hero, who but for those arts which she practised would have shone with unspotted lustre, shall be mentioned with mingled sentiments of regret and indignation.

After the death of Nelson, Lady Hamilton was extremely piqued at the munificent grants which were showered by parliament upon the several members of his family, while all her claims, and the recommendations of the departed chief, were wholly disregarded. The declaration, in the form of a codicil, which his Lordship drew up, and attested in her favour, the last day of his life, having been delivered to his brother, was kept by him till the earldom and the parliamentary rewards were all settled; and then, in the most ungracious manner imaginable, with a sardonic grin peculiar to himself, he threw her the paper, because he knew

that it could be of no other use to her than as an additional proof of the hold which she held over the heart of the illustrious writer. This, it must be allowed, was but a sorry return for all the kindness which the new lord had experienced himself, and particularly for the liberal manner in which his own daughter had been entertained at Merton, where she was a settled resident several years. But nothing better could well be expected of one, who, after his advancement to the peerage, with all its lucrative consequences, continued to hold tenaciously his ecclesiastical preferment, in opposition to his brother's dying request, that it might be relinquished in favour of the friend who attended him in his last moments. This, therefore, is one instance among many which might be adduced to shew, that whatever be the policy and justice of acting liberally towards those who greatly distinguish themselves in the cause of their country, there ought to be

some prudence and discrimination in apportioning national honours and rewards. When a brave commander falls in battle, let his widow and children, if he has any, be properly remunerated ; but there surely is little wisdom in conferring high distinctions and immense grants upon collateral branches of the family, without considering whether they have either virtue or talents that may entitle them to such favours. As Nelson died without ligitimate issue, the most proper course would have been to have created his lady a peeress, in her own right, with an ample estate to support the title. In doing this, government would have marked its respect for virtue, at the same time that it expressed a due regard for the extraordinary services of the gallant admiral: but by passing the widow entirely aside in the distribution of honours, and pouring the whole, with immense prodigality, upon persons whose own merits would never have raised them to eminence, something

very like neglect bordering on injustice was committed.

Here there was a justifiable ground of complaint; but Lady Hamilton most unquestionably had no right to make any, since the very nature of her demands prevented them from being attended to by any ministers who retained a moral feeling and a reverence for private virtue. But while the suffering widow of Nelson neither murmured against the government, nor resented the conduct of her own relations, the woman who ought to have preserved an absolute silence was loud and vehement on the subject of her pretended wrongs. She also caused the life of the hero to be printed, in which her merits were displayed with great parade, and a bitter anathema denounced against the British nation, if it should continue deaf to her claims. She afterwards printed a memorial, setting forth more in detail these services, and the ill-treatment which she had experienced, not only from govern-

ment, but from some individuals who owed her the greatest obligations. Though these representations were properly disregarded, because they rested for the most part on fallacious grounds; still, it cannot be denied, that the orphan, who was so feelingly bequeathed to the nation by the dying Nelson, has a just call upon the country for an adequate provision suited to her origin. Let not the faults of the parents be visited on the head of the innocent: and while so much has been showered upon persons, whose good-fortune is owing solely to their alliance in blood to this distinguished commander, it would certainly be cruel to withhold a portion of the public bounty from the child of his dearest affections.

It is to be lamented that our great hero did not himself take better care of this beloved object, by his testamentary settlement, than leaving her under the sole guardianship of Lady Hamilton, with an encomium upon her Ladyship's moral and

religious qualities, which, beyond all question, she did not deserve. As a proof how well she merited this confidence and praise, it may be mentioned, without any injury to the survivor, that she made it her chief study and delight to instruct the young Horatia, when seven or eight years old, in theatrical action, declamation, and singing. So imprudent indeed was the mother, as to cause the child to exhibit before large companies in various characters, to shew her agility, the elegance of her attitudes, and the powers of her memory in recitation.

Much as Lady Hamilton had to complain of the inconstancy of her most intimate acquaintance, and of the want of gratitude in those upon whom she placed most dependance, there were a few persons of rank and affluence, who still admired her accomplishments, and readily contributed to the supply of her wants. The principal of these was the late eccentric Duke of Queensberry, who had followed her with delight in

former days, and who cheerfully renewed an acquaintance with her on the return of Sir William to England. When she was obliged to part with Merton, and to lay down her carriage, his Grace very generously furnished a house for her Ladyship at Richmond, and allowed her a sufficiency, by which she was enabled again to set up an equipage. His presents also were very large; and when he died, at the close of the year 1810, he bequeathed to her one thousand pounds, with an annuity, charged upon his personal estate, of five hundred more. But as the extent of the legacies appeared to go beyond the means of defraying them, an application to the Court of Chancery put a restraint upon the payment, and her Ladyship derived no advantage from the benevolent intentions of her noble friend. This disappointment was rendered more severe by the extreme folly of which she was guilty, in having enlarged her establishment on the expected increase

of her income. Fresh difficulties were the consequence, and many efforts were made to extricate her Ladyship from them by renewed applications to government; and even the patriotic fund at Lloyd's was moved to bestow a liberal grant upon one, who, it was alleged, had rendered essential service to her country. But none of these petitions proving successful, and most of her private friends falling off in the time of her utmost need, an execution was entered upon her property, the whole of which was sold by auction in Bond Street, not even excepting the presents which she had received from Lord Nelson, including, among other valuable articles, the box with the freedom of the city of Oxford in it, given by that corporation to the hero of the Nile. But misfortune did not end here, for other creditors, being vexed at the loss which they had sustained, arrested her Ladyship, in the summer of 1813, and she was conveyed to the King's Bench,

within the rules of which prison she resided, with her daughter, enduring many privations, and feeling the instability of friendship, and the uncertainty of human enjoyments. But, as if this extraordinary woman had been destined to endure the utmost mortification from the baseness and ingratitude of the worthless parasites who had basked in the sunshine of her prosperity, while she was thus in confinement, some of her confidants had the unparalleled impudence to publish the letters which passed between her and Nelson, adding to that scandalous collection several others, from various persons of eminence. It has been too generally supposed, that Lady Hamilton, in the season of her affliction, yielding to necessity and resentment, suffered these sad proofs of infidelity to be given to the world; but in this she has been greatly wronged, and amidst all her faults, the breach of faith and modesty, in this instance, cannot with justice be added to

the number. At the time when she was silly enough to cause a vindication of her conduct abroad, and her connexion with Nelson to be written, she took a man and his family into her house, who lived there, entirely at her expense, for the space of two years. This wretch having constant access to all her papers and correspondence, thought proper to select from the mass what he conceived would be useful to his ends at a future day. When the unhappy woman, who had so indiscreetly misplaced her confidence, became reduced to a state of need, and could no longer be of service to those who had fattened upon her bounty, a foul advantage was taken of her helplessness, by publishing this correspondence, and artfully making the world believe that it was done with her consent. In vain did the sufferer protest against the iniquity of the deed, and assert her entire ignorance of the design; for the public declaration which she made to that effect only served as an

advertisement to the work. In doing this, she acted by the counsel of a very worthy gentleman; but she would have been better advised, in applying to the Court of Chancery for an injunction to stop the publication of private letters, which were her exclusive property, and had been treacherously obtained from her for the worst of purposes. This was the proper and only effectual course that could have been adopted in such a nefarious business; but unfortunately it was never thought of by Lady Hamilton, or by the few friends who remained firm in their attachment, when the storm of adversity came upon her in the evening of life. After being in confinement above ten months, she obtained her discharge through the kindness of one of the city aldermen, who pitied her case, and thought, that, with all her errors, she had been cruelly treated. Immediately on her liberation, she withdrew to the continent, and took up her abode near Calais,

till she could have an opportunity of seeking an asylum among her former acquaintance in Italy, to which country she looked, with some degree of certainty, as affording a secure retreat from the chilling contempt and keen severity that had so roughly assailed her vanity in the north. But, as if she had been destined to find no resting place in this world, her means were so contracted, that she could not follow her inclinations; which disappointment, with the agitated state of her mind, owing to the injury she had sustained by the outrage committed upon her private papers, preyed upon her spirits, and brought on a disorder which soon assumed an alarming aspect. She had for some years lost that elegance of form which in former days rendered her an object of general admiration. This corpulency was increased by a gross voluptuary indulgence, and an indolent course of life, which brought on bilious complaints and flatulency. During the whole of her

illness she was attended with the greatest affection by her child, and this alone gave her comfort in her distressing situation; and when, at last, she found that there were no hopes of a recovery, she employed the little time that remained in preparing such documents and memorials as might be of service to this interesting object, who was now about to encounter the rude storms of the world, without a relation or guardian to take a tender interest in her welfare. This consideration pressed heavily on the mind of the dying parent, who manifested the most affectionate concern for her child, by endeavouring to sooth her mind, and to allay her fears, giving her the best advice for her future conduct, and settling all her affairs in such a manner as appeared best adapted to secure the property, which had been set apart for her use, from any attempts that might be made to injure the rights of the orphan and the destitute. A sealed packet was also carefully en-

trusted to her hands, but with strict injunctions that it should not be opened till the attainment of her eighteenth year; which corresponded also with the particular settlement in the codicil added to the will of Nelson, providing for the maintenance of this very child under the denomination of his adopted daughter.

The author of these sheets had long suspected that her Ladyship was secretly attached to the Romish faith; and her most intimate friends who knew her in Italy will probably recollect some particulars, which would serve to strengthen the persuasion that she had actually been reconciled many years ago to that church. One circumstance which may be mentioned was that of her having a confidential monk to attend her, who passed as her tutor in the languages, but who, it is strongly suspected, acted as her confessor. In England, indeed, she went sometimes to the parish church, but occasionally she is known to have visited a Catholic place of worship: and though

persons of her character have seldom any fixed principles of religion, yet, towards the close of life, they have generally some serious compunctions and reflections, which usually incline them to embrace any persuasion that holds out the strongest encouragements to hope. That this extraordinary woman called in the assistance of a priest of the Romish church in her last moments is certain, nor is it less so, that he administered to her the solemn viaticum, which no ecclesiastic of his communion can impart to any but baptized members and converts. It has been said, that there was no protestant minister in the place, whose assistance could be procured at this awful period; but though perhaps that may be true, it is equally so that she must have been formally admitted to the peace of the church by a solemn recognition, before absolution could be pronounced, or the eucharist, as the seal of her pardon, be administered.

Thus did one of the most extraordinary

women of modern times terminate, on the sixteenth of January, 1815, her course of uncommon vicissitudes, in a foreign land, surrounded by strangers, and so oppressed by poverty, that her remains were nearly consigned to a spot of ground appropriated to the lowest description of the poor, for the want of means to defray the expences of a decent funeral; when an English merchant at Calais, shocked at the circumstance, undertook the charge; and all the respectable gentlemen of this nation, amounting to about fifty, attended as mourners at the interment, which was duly performed in the principal cemetry of that place. The same generous person, who so humanely provided a decent sepulture for the dead, extended also his protecting hand to the child that she had left, and who was now in danger of suffering for her mother's folly and extravagance. But the liberal merchant rescued the orphan from the machinations of those creditors in France, who, ac-

cording to the laws of that country, would have detained her for the debts of her parent. On her arrival in England she was entrusted to the guardianship of Mr. Matcham, the brother-in-law of Lord Nelson, and who, there can be no doubt, will watch over her interests with that sedulous concern, which he would have felt it his duty to discharge, had she been committed to him by the special and solemn request of his departed friend.

Thus did the last "scene of all" in the "strange eventful history" of the once fascinating Emma comport with the rest of her chequered existence; for her life was a series of marvellous adventures, from the time when she went barefooted in a Welch village, to her entrance upon a state of dissipation in London, where her extraordinary beauty and accomplishments rendered her an object of universal admiration, and occasioned her transplantation to a soil perfectly suited to her taste for pleasure, and to the versatile

powers of her genius. How she figured in that land of voluptuous delight, and the effects which her influence produced, it will be for history to record, and posterity to lament; but after her return to England she began very soon to experience the mutability of fortune, which she wanted prudence to improve; and, indeed, as her adversity came on, her folly increased, till at length, solely from that cause, she was driven into exile, where she closed her days in sorrow and poverty, unpitied by those around her in the hour of sickness, while her wretched remains were indebted for a grave to the hand of charity.

FINIS.

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